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THE WORKS

OF

AURELIUS AUGUSTINE,

BISHOP OF HIPPO.

A NEW TRANSLATION.

Edited by the

REV. MARCUS DODS, M.A.

VOL. XIII.

THE LETTERS OF SAINT AUGUSTINE.

VOLUME II.

EDINBURGH:
T. & T. CLARK, 38, GEORGE STREET.
MDCCCLXXV.

LETTERS

OF

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BISHOP OF HIPPO.

Translated by

THE REV. J. G. CUNNINGHAM,
LOCHWINNOCH.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

Of the two hundred and seventy-two letters given in the Benedictine edition of Augustine's works, one hundred and sixty are translated in this selection. In the former volume few were omitted, and the reason for each omission was given in its own place. As the proportion of untranslated letters is in this volume much larger, it may be more convenient to indicate briefly here the general reasons which have guided us in the selection.

We have omitted—

I. Almost all the letters referring to the Donatist schism, as there is enough on this subject in the works on the Donatist controversy (vol. iii. of this series) and in numerous earlier letters. This excludes—105, 106, 107, 108, 128, 129, 134, 141, 142, and 204.

II. Almost all the letters relating to Pelagianism, as the series contains three volumes of Augustine's anti-Pelagian writings (vols. iv. xii. xv.). This excludes—156, 157, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 181, 182, 183, 184, 184 *bis*, 186, 193, 194, 214, 215, 216, 217.

III. Almost all the letters referring to the doctrine of the Trinity, as this has been already given, partly in earlier letters, and more fully in the volume on the Trinity (vol. vii. of this series). This excludes—119, 120, 170, 174, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242.

IV. Almost all those which in design, style, and prolixity, are exegetical or doctrinal treatises rather than letters. This excludes—140, 147, 149, 152, 153, 154, 155, 162, 187, 190, 196, 197, 198, 199, 202 *bis*, 205.

V. Some of the letters written by others to Augustine. This excludes—94, 109, 121, 160, 168, 225, 226, 230, 270.

VI. A large number of miscellaneous smaller letters, as, in order to avoid going beyond the limits of one volume, it was necessary to select only the more interesting and important of these. This excludes—110, 112, 113, 114, 127, 161, 162, 171, 200, 206, 207, 221, 222, 223, 224, 233, 234, 235, 236, 243, 244, 247, 248, 249, 251, 252, 253, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268.

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LETTERS OF ST. AUGUSTINE.

LETTER XCIV.

(A.D. 408.)

A letter to Augustine from Paulinus and Therasia, the substance of which is sufficiently stated in the next letter, which contains the reply of Augustine to his friend's questions concerning the present life, the nature of the bodies of the blessed in the life to come, and the functions of the members of the body after the resurrection.

LETTER XCV.

(A.D. 408.)

TO BROTHER PAULINUS AND SISTER THERASIA, MOST BELOVED AND SINCERE, SAINTS WORTHY OF AFFECTION AND VENERATION, FELLOW-DISCIPLES WITH HIMSELF UNDER THE LORD JESUS AS MASTER, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. WHEN brethren most closely united to us, towards whom along with us you are accustomed both to cherish and to express sentiments of regard which we all cordially reciprocate, have frequent occasions of visiting you, this benefit is one by which we are comforted under evil rather than made to rejoice in increase of good. For we strive to the utmost of our power to avoid the causes and emergencies which necessitate their journeys, and yet,—I know not how, unless it be as just retribution,—they cannot be dispensed with: but when they return to us and see us, that word of Scripture is fulfilled in our experience: "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, Thy comforts delight my soul."[1] Accordingly, when you

[1] Ps. xciv. 19.

learn from our brother Possidius himself how sad is the occasion which has compelled him to go to Italy,[1] you will know how true the remarks I have made are in regard to the joy which he has in meeting you; and yet, if any of us should cross the sea for the one purpose of enjoying a meeting with you, what more cogent or worthy reason could be found? This, however, would not be compatible with those obligations by which we are bound to minister to those who are languid through infirmity, and not to withdraw our bodily presence from them, unless their malady, assuming a dangerous form, makes such departure imperative. Whether in these things we are receiving chastening or judgment I know not; but this I know, that He is not dealing with us according to our sins, nor requiting us according to our iniquities,[2] who mingles so great comfort with our tribulation, and who, by remedies which fill us with wonder, secures that we shall not love the world, and shall not by it be made to fall away.

2. I asked in a former letter your opinion as to the nature of the future life of the saints; but you have said in your reply that we have still much to study concerning our condition in this present life, and you do well, except in this, that you have expressed your desire to learn from me that of which you are either equally ignorant or equally well-informed with myself, or rather, of which you know much more perhaps than I do; for you have said with perfect truth, that before we meet the dissolution of this mortal body, we must die, in a gospel sense, by a voluntary departure, withdrawing ourselves, not by death, but by deliberate resolution, from the life of this world. This course is a simple one, and is beset with no waves of uncertainty, because we are of opinion that we ought so to live in this mortal life that we may be in some measure fitted for immortality. The whole question, however, which, when discussed and investigated, perplexes men like myself, is this—how we ought to live among or for the welfare of those who have not yet learned to live by dying, not in the dissolution of the body, but by

[1] Possidius, bishop of Calama, was going to Rome to complain of the outrage of the Pagans of Calama, described in Letter XCI. sec. 8, vol. i. p. 387.

[2] Ps. ciii. 10.

turning themselves with a certain mental resolution away from the attractions of mere natural things. For in most cases, it seems to us that unless we in some small degree conform to them in regard to those very things from which we desire to see them delivered, we shall not succeed in doing them any good. And when we do thus conform, a pleasure in such things steals upon ourselves, so that often we are pleased to speak and to listen to frivolous things, and not only to smile at them, but even to be completely overcome with laughter: thus burdening our souls with feelings which cleave to the dust, or even to the mire of this world, we experience greater difficulty and reluctance in raising ourselves to God that by dying a gospel-death we may live a gospel-life. And whensoever this state of mind is reached, immediately thereupon will follow the commendation, "Well done! well done!" not from men, for no man perceives in another the mental act by which divine things are apprehended, but in a certain inward silence there sounds I know not whence, "Well done! well done!" Because of this kind of temptation, the great apostle confesses that he was buffeted by the angel.[1] Behold whence it comes that our whole life on earth is a temptation; for man is tempted even in that thing in which he is being conformed so far as he can be to the likeness of the heavenly life.

3. What shall I say as to the infliction or remission of punishment, in cases in which we have no other desire than to forward the spiritual welfare of those in regard to whom we judge that they ought or ought not to be punished? Also, if we consider not only the nature and magnitude of faults, but also what each may be able or unable to bear according to his strength of mind, how deep and dark a question it is to adjust the amount of punishment so as to prevent the person who receives it not only from getting no good, but also from suffering loss thereby! Besides, I know not whether a greater number have been improved or made worse when alarmed under threats of such punishment at the hands of men as is an object of fear. What, then, is the path of duty, seeing that it often happens that

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 7.

if you inflict punishment on one he goes to destruction; whereas, if you leave him unpunished, another is destroyed? I confess that I make mistakes daily in regard to this, and that I know not when and how to observe the rule of Scripture: "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others may fear;"[1] and that other rule, "Tell him his fault between thee and him alone;"[2] and the rule, "Judge nothing before the time;"[3] "Judge not, that ye be not judged"[4] (in which command the Lord has not added the words, "before the time"); and this saying of Scripture, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth: yea, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand;"[5] by which words he makes it plain that he is speaking of those who are within the Church; yet, on the other hand, he commands them to be judged when he says, "What have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."[6] But when this is necessary, how much care and fear is occasioned by the question to what extent it should be done, lest that happen which, in his second epistle to them, the apostle is found admonishing these persons to beware of in that very example, saying, "lest, perhaps, such an one should be swallowed up with over much sorrow;" adding, in order to prevent men from thinking this a thing not calling for anxious care, "lest Satan should get an advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices."[7] What trembling we feel in all these things, my brother Paulinus, O holy man of God! what trembling, what darkness! May we not think that with reference to these things it was said, "Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me. And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness." And yet even in the wilderness perchance he still experienced it; for he adds, "I waited for Him who should deliver me from weakness and from tempest."[8]

[1] 1 Tim. v. 20. [2] Matt. xviii. 15. [3] 1 Cor. iv. 5.
[4] Matt. vii. 1. [5] Rom. xiv. 4. [6] 1 Cor. v. 12, 13.
[7] 2 Cor. ii. 7, 11. [8] Ps. lv. 5–8, as given in the LXX.

Truly, therefore, is the life of man upon the earth a life of temptation.[1]

4. Moreover, as to the oracles of God, is it not true that they are lightly touched rather than grasped and handled by us, seeing that in by far the greater part of them we do not already possess opinions definite and ascertained, but are rather inquiring what our opinion ought to be? And this caution, though attended with abundant disquietude, is much better than the rashness of dogmatic assertion. Also, if a man is not carnally minded (which the apostle says is death), will he not be a great cause of offence to those who are still carnally minded, in many parts of Scripture in the exposition of which to say what you believe is most perilous, and to refrain from saying it is most grievous, and to say something else than what you believe is most pernicious? Nay more, when in the discourses or writings of those who are within the Church we find some things censurable, and do not conceal our disapprobation (supposing such correction to be according to the freedom of brotherly love), how great a sin is committed against us when we are suspected of being actuated in this by envy and not by goodwill! and how much do we sin against others, when we in like manner impute to those who find fault with our opinions a desire rather to wound than to correct us! Verily, there arise usually from this cause bitter enmities even between persons bound to each other by the greatest affection and intimacy, when, "thinking of men above that which is written, any one is puffed up for one against another;"[2] and while they bite and devour one another, "there is reason to fear lest they be consumed one of another."[3] Therefore, "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest."[4] For whether it be that the dangers by which one is beset seem to him greater than those of which he has no experience, or that my impressions are correct, I cannot help thinking that any amount of weakness and of tempest in the wilderness would be more easily borne than the things which we feel or fear in the busy world.

5. I therefore greatly approve of your saying that we

[1] Job vii. 1. [2] 1 Cor. iv. 6. [3] Gal. v. 15. [4] Ps. lv. 6.

should make the state in which men stand, or rather the course which they run, in this present life, the theme of our discussion. I add as another reason for our giving this subject the preference, that the finding and following of the course itself must come before our finding and possessing that towards which it leads. When, therefore, I asked your views on this, I acted as if, through holding and observing carefully the right rule of this life, we were already free from disquietude concerning its course, although I feel in so many things, and especially in those which I have mentioned, that I toil in the midst of very great dangers. Nevertheless, forasmuch as the cause of all this ignorance and embarrassment appears to me to be that, in the midst of a great variety of manners and of minds having inclinations and infirmities hidden altogether from our sight, we seek the interest of those who are citizens and subjects, not of Rome which is on earth, but of Jerusalem which is in heaven, it seemed to me more agreeable to converse with you about what we shall be, than about what we now are. For although we do not know the blessings which are to be enjoyed yonder, of one thing at least we are assured, and it is not a small thing, that yonder the evils which we experience here shall have no place.

6. Wherefore, as to the ordering of this present life in the way which we must follow in order to the attainment of eternal life, I know that our carnal appetites must be held in check, only so much concession being made to the gratification of the bodily senses as suffices for the support of this life and the active discharge of its duties, and that all the vexations of this life which come upon us in connection with the truth of God, and the eternal welfare of ourselves or of our neighbours, must be borne with patience and fortitude. I know also that with all the zeal of love we should seek the good of our neighbour, that he may rightly spend the present life so as to obtain life eternal. I know also that we ought to prefer spiritual to carnal, immutable to mutable things, and that all this a man is so much more or less enabled to do, according as he is more or less helped by the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. But I do not know the reason why one or another is more or less

helped or not helped by that grace; this only I know, that God does this with perfect justice, and for reasons which to Himself are known as sufficient. In regard, however, to the things which I have mentioned above, as to the way in which we ought to live amongst men, if anything has become known to you through experience or meditation, I beseech you to give me instruction. And if these things perplex you not less than myself, make them the subject of conference with some judicious spiritual physician, whom you may find either where you reside, or in Rome, when you make your annual visit to the city, and thereafter write to me whatever the Lord may reveal to you through his instructions, or to you and him together when engaged in conversation on the subject.

7. As to the resurrection of the body, and the future offices of its members in the incorruptible and immortal state, since you have, in return for the questions which I put to you, inquired my views on these matters, listen to a brief statement which, if it be not sufficient, may afterwards, with the Lord's help, be amplified by fuller discussion. It is to be held most firmly, as a doctrine in regard to which the testimony of Holy Scripture is true and unmistakable, that these visible and earthly bodies which are now called natural,[1] shall, in the resurrection of the faithful and just, be spiritual bodies. At the same time, I do not know how the quality of a spiritual body can be comprehended or stated by us, seeing that it lies beyond the range of our experience. There shall be, assuredly, in such bodies no corruption, and therefore they shall not require the perishable nourishment which is now necessary; yet though unnecessary, it will not be impossible for them at their pleasure to take and actually consume food; otherwise it would not have been taken after His resurrection by the Lord, who has given us such an example of the resurrection of the body, that the apostle argues from it: "If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised."[2] But He, when He appeared to His disciples, having all His members, and using them according to their functions, also pointed out to them the places where His wounds had been, regarding which I have always supposed that they were the scars, not the wounds

[1] Animalia, 1 Cor. xv. 34. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 16.

themselves, and that they were there, not of necessity, but according to His free exercise of power. He gave at that time the clearest evidence of the ease with which He exercised this power, both by showing Himself in another form to the two disciples, and by His appearing, not as a spirit, but in His true body, to the disciples in the upper chamber, although the doors were shut.[1]

8. From this arises the question as to angels, whether they have bodies adapted to their duties and their swift motions from place to place, or are only spirits? For if we say that they have bodies, we are met by the passage: "He maketh His angels spirits;"[2] and if we say that they have not bodies, a still greater difficulty meets us in explaining how, if they are without bodily form, it is written that they appeared to the bodily senses of men, accepted offers of hospitality, permitted their feet to be washed, and used the meat and drink which was provided for them.[3] For it seems to involve us in less difficulty, if we suppose that the angels are there called spirits in the same manner as men are called souls, *e.g.* in the statement that so many souls (not signifying that they had not bodies also) went down with Jacob into Egypt,[4] than if we suppose that, without bodily form, all these things were done by angels. Again, a certain definite height is named in the Apocalypse as the stature of an angel, in dimensions which could apply only to bodies, proving that that which appeared to the eyes of men is to be explained, not as an illusion, but as resulting from the power which we have spoken of as easily put forth by spiritual bodies. But whether angels have bodies or not, and whether or not any one be able to show how without bodies they could do all these things, it is nevertheless certain, that in that city of the holy in which those of our race who have been redeemed by Christ shall be united for ever to thousands of angels, voices proceeding from organs of speech shall furnish expression to the thoughts of minds in which nothing is hidden; for in that divine fellowship it will not be possible for any thought in one to remain concealed from

[1] Luke xxiv. 15–43; John xx. 14–29; Mark xvi. 12, 14.
[2] Ps. civ. 4 and Heb. i. 7.
[3] Gen. xviii. 2–9 and xix. 1–3.
[4] Gen. xlvi. 27.

another, but there shall be complete harmony and oneness of heart in the praise of God, and this shall find utterance not only from the spirit, but through the spiritual body as its instrument; this, at least, is what I believe.

9. Meanwhile, if you have already found or can learn from other teachers anything more fully agreeing with the truth than this, I am most eagerly longing to be instructed therein by you. Study carefully, if you please, my letter, in regard to which, as you pled in excuse for your very hurried reply the haste of the deacon who brought it to me, I do not make any complaint, but rather remind you of it, in order that what was then omitted in your answer may now be supplied. Look over it again, and observe what I wished to learn from you, both regarding your opinion concerning Christian retirement as a means to the acquisition and discussion of the truths of Christian wisdom, and regarding that retirement in which I supposed that you had found leisure, but in which it is reported to me that you are engrossed with occupation to an incredible extent.

May you, in whom the holy God has given us great joy and consolation, live mindful of us, and in true felicity. (*This sentence is added by another hand.*)

LETTER XCVI.

(A.D. 408.)

TO OLYMPIUS, MY LORD GREATLY BELOVED, AND MY SON WORTHY OF HONOUR AND REGARD AS A MEMBER OF CHRIST, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING.

1. WHATEVER your rank may be in connection with the course of this world, I have the greatest confidence in addressing you as my much-loved, true-hearted Christian fellow-servant Olympius. For I know that this name, in your esteem, excels all other glorious and lofty titles. Reports have indeed reached me that you have obtained some promotion in worldly honour, but no information confirming the truth of the rumour had come to me up to the time when this opportunity of writing to you occurred. Since, however, I know that you

have learned from the Lord not to mind high things, but to condescend to those who are lightly esteemed by men, whatever the pinnacle to which you may have been raised, we take for granted, my lord greatly beloved, and son worthy of honour and regard as a member of Christ, that you will still make a letter from me welcome, just as you were wont to do. And as to your worldly prosperity, I do not doubt that you will wisely use it for your eternal gain; so that the greater the influence which you acquire in the commonwealth on this earth, the more will you devote yourself to the interests of the heavenly city to which you owe your birth in Christ, forasmuch as this shall be more abundantly repaid to you in the land of the living, and in the true peace which yields sure and endless joys.[1]

2. I again commend to your kind consideration the petition of my brother and colleague Boniface, in the hope that what could not be done before may be in your power now. He might perhaps, indeed, legally retain, without any further difficulty, that which his predecessor had acquired, though under another name than his own, and which he had begun to possess in name of the church; but we do not wish, since his predecessor was in debt to the public exchequer, to have this burden upon our conscience. For that act of fraud was none the less truly fraud because perpetrated at the expense of the public revenue. The same Paul (the predecessor of Boniface), when he was made bishop, being about to surrender all his effects because of the accumulated burden of arrears due to the public exchequer, having secured payment of a bond by which a certain sum of money was due to him, bought with it, as if for the church, in the name of a family then very powerful, these few fields by the produce of which he might support himself, in order that, in respect to these also, after his old practice, he might escape annoyance at the hands of the collectors of the revenue, although he was paying no tax. Boniface, however, when ordained over the same church, on his death,

[1] This Olympius was appointed in 408 (A.D.) to the office of highest authority in the court of Honorius (magister officiorum), in room of Stilicho, who was put to death at Ravenna on account of suspected complicity with the authors of the sedition which threatened the life of the emperor at Pavia.

hesitated to take the fields which he had thus held; and although he might have contented himself with asking from the emperor no more than a remission of the fiscal arrears which his predecessor had incurred on this small property, he preferred to confess without reserve that Paul had bought the property at an auction with money of his own, at a time when he was bankrupt as a debtor to the public revenue, so that now the Church may, if possible, obtain possession of this, not through the secret fraud of her bishop, but by an open act of the Christian emperor's liberality. And if this be impossible, the servants of God prefer to bear the hardship of want, rather than obtain the supply of that which they require under reproaches of conscience for dishonourable dealing.

3. I beg you to condescend to give your support to this petition, because he has resolved not to bring forward the decision in his favour which was formerly obtained, lest it should preclude him from the liberty of making a second application; for the answer then given fell short of what he desired. And now, since you are of the same kindly disposition that you formerly were, but possessed of greater influence, I do not despair of this being easily granted by the Lord's help, in consideration of your claims on the emperor; and if even you were to ask the gift of this property in your own name, and present it to the church of which I have spoken, who would find fault with your request; nay, rather, who would not commend it, as dictated not by personal covetousness, but by Christian piety? May the mercy of the Lord our God shield you, and make you more and more happy in Christ, my lord and son.

LETTER XCVII.

(A.D. 408.)

TO OLYMPIUS, MY EXCELLENT AND JUSTLY DISTINGUISHED LORD, AND MY SON WORTHY OF MUCH HONOUR IN CHRIST, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. ALTHOUGH, when we heard recently of your having obtained merited promotion to the highest rank, we felt persuaded, however uncertain we still were in some degree as to the truth

of the report, that towards the Church of which we rejoice to know that you are truly a son, there was no other feeling in your mind than that which you have now made patent to us in your letter, nevertheless, having now read that letter in which you have been pleased of your own accord to send to us, when we were full of backwardness and diffidence, a most gracious exhortation to use our humble efforts in pointing out to you how the Lord, by whose gift you are thus powerful, may from time to time, by means of your pious obedience, bring assistance to His Church, we write to you with the more abundant confidence, my excellent and justly distinguished lord, and my son worthy of much honour in Christ.

2. Many brethren, indeed, holy men who are my colleagues, have, by reason of the troubles of the church here, gone—I might almost say as fugitives—to the emperor's most illustrious court; and these brethren you may have already seen, or may have received from Rome their letters, in connection with their respective occasions of appeal. I have not had it in my power to consult them before writing; nevertheless, I was unwilling to miss the opportunity of sending a letter by the bearer, my brother and fellow-presbyter, who has been compelled, though in mid-winter, to make the best of his way into those parts, under pressing necessity, in order to save the life of a fellow-citizen. I write, therefore, to salute you, and to charge you by the love which you have in Christ Jesus our Lord, to see that your good work be hastened on with the utmost diligence, in order that the enemies of the Church may know that those laws concerning the demolition of idols and the correction of heretics which were sent into Africa while Stilicho yet lived, were framed by the desire of our most pious and faithful emperor; for they either cunningly boast, or unwillingly imagine, that this was done without his knowledge, or against his will, and thus they render the minds of the ignorant full of seditious violence, and excite them to dangerous and vehement enmity against us.

3. I do not doubt that, in submitting this in the way of petition or respectful suggestion to the consideration of your Excellency, I act agreeably to the wishes of all my colleagues throughout Africa; and I think that it is your duty to take

measures, as could be easily done, on whatever opportunity may first arise, to make it understood by these vain men (whose salvation we seek, although they resist us), that it was to the care, not of Stilicho, but of the son of Theodosius, that those laws which have been sent into Africa for the defence of the Church of Christ owed their promulgation. On account of these things, then, the presbyter whom I have mentioned already, the bearer of this letter, who is from the district of Milevi, was ordered by his bishop, the venerable Severus, who joins me in cordial salutations to you, whose love we esteem most genuine, to pass through Hippo-regius, where I am; because, when we happened to meet together in time of serious tribulation and distress to the Church, we sought an opportunity of writing to your Highness, but found none. I had indeed already sent one letter in regard to the business of our holy brother and colleague Boniface, bishop of Cataqua; but the heavier calamities destined to cause us greater agitation had not then befallen us, regarding which, and the means whereby something may be done with the best counsel for their prevention or punishment, according to the method of Christ, the bishops who have sailed hence on that errand will be able more conveniently to confer with you, in whose cordial goodwill towards us we rejoice, inasmuch as they are able to report to you something which has been, so far as limited time permitted, the result of careful and united consultation. But as to this other matter, namely, that the province be made to know how the mind of our most gracious and religious emperor stands towards the Church, I recommend, nay, I beg, beseech, and implore you, to take care that no time be lost, but that its accomplishment be hastened, even before you see the bishops who have gone from us, so soon as shall be possible for you, in the exercise of your most eminent vigilance on behalf of the members of Christ who are now in circumstances of the utmost danger; for the Lord has provided no small consolation for us under these trials, seeing that it has pleased Him to put much more now than formerly in your power, although we were already filled with joy by the number and the magnitude of your good offices.

4. We rejoice much in the firm and stedfast faith of some,

and these not few in number, who by means of these laws have been converted to the Christian religion, or from schism to Catholic peace, for whose eternal welfare we are glad to run the risk of forfeiting temporal welfare. For on this account especially we now have to endure at the hands of men, exceedingly and obdurately perverse, more grievous assaults of enmity, which some of them, along with us, bear most patiently; but we are in very great fear because of their weakness, until they learn, and are enabled by the help of the Lord's most compassionate grace, to despise with more abundant strength of spirit the present world and man's short day. May it please your Highness to deliver the letter of instructions which I have sent to my brethren the bishops when they come, if, as I suppose, they have not yet reached you. For we have such confidence in the unfeigned devotion of your heart, that with the Lord's help we desire to have you not only giving us your assistance, but also participating in our consultations.

LETTER XCVIII.

(A.D. 408.)

TO BONIFACE, HIS COLLEAGUE IN THE EPISCOPAL OFFICE, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. You ask me to state "whether parents do harm to their baptized infant children, when they attempt to heal them in time of sickness by sacrifices to the false gods of the heathen." Also, "if they do thereby no harm to their children, how can any advantage come to these children at their baptism, through the faith of parents whose departure from the faith does them no harm?" To which I reply, that in the holy union of the parts of the body of Christ, so great is the virtue of that sacrament, namely, of baptism, which brings salvation, that so soon as he who owed his first birth to others, acting under the impulse of natural instincts, has been made partaker of the second birth by others, acting under the impulse of spiritual desires, he cannot be thenceforward held under the bond of that sin in another to which he does not with his own will consent. "Both the soul of the father is mine," saith the

Lord, "and the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die;"[1] but he does not sin on whose behalf his parents or any other one resort, without his knowledge, to the impiety of worshipping heathen deities. That bond of guilt which was to be cancelled by the grace of this sacrament he derived from Adam, for this reason, that at the time of Adam's sin he was not yet a soul having a separate life, *i.e.* another soul regarding which it could be said, "both the soul of the father is mine, and the soul of the son is mine." Therefore now, when the man has a personal, separate existence, being thereby made distinct from his parents, he is not held responsible for that sin in another which is performed without his consent. In the former case, he derived guilt from another, because, at the time when the guilt which he has derived was incurred, he was one with the person from whom he derived it, and was in him. But one man does not derive guilt from another, when, through the fact that each has a separate life belonging to himself, the word may apply equally to both—"The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

2. But the possibility of regeneration through the office rendered by the will of another, when the child is presented to receive the sacred rite, is the work exclusively of the Spirit by whom the child thus presented is regenerated. For it is not written, "Except a man be born again by the will of his parents, or by the faith of those presenting the child, or of those administering the ordinance," but, "Except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit."[2] By the water, therefore, which holds forth the sacrament of grace in its outward form, and by the Spirit who bestows the benefit of grace in its inward power, cancelling the bond of guilt, and restoring natural goodness [reconcilians bonum naturæ], the man deriving his first birth originally from Adam alone, is regenerated in Christ alone. Now the regenerating Spirit is possessed in common both by the parents who present the child, and by the infant that is presented and is born again; wherefore, in virtue of this participation in the same Spirit, the will of those who present the infant is useful to the child. But when the parents sin against the child by presenting him to

[1] Ezek. xviii. 4. [2] John iii. 5.

the false gods of the heathen, and attempting to bring him under impious bonds unto these false gods, there is not such community of souls subsisting between the parents and the child, that the guilt of one party can be common to both alike. For we are not made partakers of guilt along with others through their will, in the same way as we are made partakers of grace along with others through the unity of the Holy Spirit; because the one Holy Spirit can be in two different persons without their knowing in respect to each other that by Him grace is the common possession of both, but the human spirit cannot so belong to two individuals as to make the blame common to both in a case in which one of the two sins, and the other does not sin. Therefore a child, having once received natural birth through his parents, can be made partaker of the second (or spiritual) birth by the Spirit of God, so that the bond of guilt which he inherited from his parents is cancelled; but he that has once received this second birth by the Spirit of God cannot be made again partaker of natural birth through his parents, so that the bond once cancelled should again bind him. And thus, when the grace of Christ has been once received, the child does not lose it otherwise than by his own impiety, if, when he becomes older, he turn out so ill. For by that time he will begin to have sins of his own, which cannot be removed by regeneration, but must be healed by other remedial measures.

3. Nevertheless, persons of more advanced years, whether they be parents bringing their children, or others bringing any little ones, who attempt to place those who have been baptized under obligation to profane worship of heathen gods, are guilty of spiritual homicide. True, they do not actually kill the children's souls, but they go as far towards killing them as is in their power. The warning, "Do not kill your little ones," may be with all propriety addressed to them; for the apostle says, "Quench not the Spirit;"[1] not that He can be quenched, but that those who so act as if they wished to have Him quenched are deservedly spoken of as quenchers of the Spirit. In this sense also may be rightly understood the words which most blessed Cyprian wrote in his letter concerning

[1] 1 Thess. v. 19.

the lapsed, when, rebuking those who in the time of persecution had sacrificed to idols, he says, "And that nothing might be wanting to fill up the measure of their crime, their infant children, carried in arms, or led thither by the hands of their parents, lost, while yet in their infancy, that which they had received as soon as life began."[1] They lost it, he meant, so far at least as pertained to the guilt of the crime of those by whom they were compelled to incur the loss: they lost it, that is to say, in the purpose and wish of those who perpetrated on them such a wrong. For had they actually in their own persons lost it, they must have remained under the divine sentence of condemnation without any plea; but if holy Cyprian had been of this opinion, he would not have added in the immediate context a plea in their defence, saying, "Shall not these say, when the judgment-day has come: 'We have done nothing; we have not of our own accord hastened to participate in profane rites, forsaking the bread and the cup of the Lord; the apostasy of others caused our destruction; we found our parents murderers, for they deprived us of our Mother the Church and of our Father the Lord, so that, through the wrong done by others, we were ensnared, because, while yet young and unable to think for ourselves, we were by the deed of others, and while wholly ignorant of such a crime, made partners in their sin'?" This plea in their defence he would not have subjoined had he not believed it to be perfectly just, and one which would be of service to these infants at the bar of divine judgment. For if it is said by them with truth, "we have done nothing," then "the soul that sinneth, it shall die;" and in the just dispensation of judgment by God, those shall not be doomed to perish whose souls their parents did, so far at least as concerns their own guilt in the transaction, bring to ruin.

4. As to the incident mentioned in the same letter, that a girl who was left as an infant in charge of her nurse, when her parents had escaped by sudden flight, and was made by that nurse to take part in the profane rites of idolatrous worship, had afterwards in the Church expelled from her mouth, by wonderful motions, the Eucharist when it was given to

[1] Cyprian, *de Lapsis*. See Clark's Ante-Nicene Library, vol. viii. p. 357.

her, this seems to me to have been caused by divine interposition, in order that persons of riper years might not imagine that in this sin they do no wrong to the children, but rather might understand, by means of a bodily action of obvious significance on the part of those who were unable to speak, that a miraculous warning was given to themselves as to the course which would have been becoming in persons who, after so great a crime, rushed heedlessly to those sacraments from which they ought by all means, in proof of penitence, to have abstained. When Divine Providence does anything of this kind by means of infant children, we must not believe that they are acting under the guidance of knowledge and reason; just as we are not called upon to admire the wisdom of asses, because once God was pleased to rebuke the madness of a prophet by the voice of an ass.[1] If, therefore, a sound exactly like the human voice was uttered by an irrational animal, and this was to be ascribed to a divine miracle, not to faculties belonging to the ass, the Almighty could, in like manner, through the spirit of an infant (in which reason was not absent, but only slumbering undeveloped), make manifest by a motion of its body something to which those who had sinned against both their own souls and their children behoved to give heed. But since a child cannot return to become again a part of the author of his natural life, so as to be one with him and in him, but is a wholly distinct individual, having a body and a soul of his own, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die."

5. Some, indeed, bring their little ones for baptism, not in the believing expectation that they shall be regenerated unto life eternal by spiritual grace, but because they think that by this as a remedy the children may recover or retain bodily health; but let not this disquiet your mind, because their regeneration is not prevented by the fact that this blessing has no place in the intention of those by whom they are presented for baptism. For by these persons the ministerial actions which are necessary are performed, and the sacramental words are pronounced, without which the infant cannot be consecrated to God. But the Holy Spirit who dwells in the saints, in those, namely, whom the glowing flame of love has

[1] Num. xxii. 28.

fused together into the one Dove whose wings are covered with silver,[1] accomplishes His work even by the ministry of bond-servants, of persons who are sometimes not only ignorant through simplicity, but even culpably unworthy to be employed by Him. The presentation of the little ones to receive the spiritual grace is the act not so much of those by whose hands they are borne up (although it is theirs also in part, if they themselves are good believers) as of the whole society of saints and believers. For it is proper to regard the infants as presented by all who take pleasure in their baptism, and through whose holy and perfectly-united love they are assisted in receiving the communion of the Holy Spirit. Therefore this is done by the whole mother Church, which is in the saints, because the whole Church is the parent of all the saints, and the whole Church is the parent of each one of them. For if the sacrament of Christian baptism, being always one and the same, is of value even when administered by heretics, and though not in that case sufficing to secure to the baptized person participation in eternal life, does suffice to seal his consecration to God; and if this consecration makes him who, having the mark of the Lord, remains outside of the Lord's flock, guilty as a heretic, but reminds us at the same time that he is to be corrected by sound doctrine, but not to be a second time consecrated by repetition of the ordinance;—if this be the case even in the baptism of heretics, how much more credible is it that within the Catholic Church that which is only straw should be of service in bearing the grain to the floor in which it is to be winnowed, and by means of which it is to be prepared for being added to the heap of good grain!

6. I would, moreover, wish you not to remain under the mistake of supposing that the bond of guilt which is inherited from Adam cannot be cancelled in any other way than by the parents themselves presenting their little ones to receive the grace of Christ; for you write: "As the parents have been the authors of the life which makes them liable to condemnation, the children should receive justification through the same channel, through the faith of the same parents;" whereas you see that many are not presented by parents, but also

[1] Ps. lxviii. 13.

by any strangers whatever, as sometimes the infant children of slaves are presented by their masters. Sometimes also, when their parents are deceased, little orphans are baptized, being presented by those who had it in their power to manifest their compassion in this way. Again, sometimes foundlings which heartless parents have exposed in order to their being cared for by any passer-by, are picked up by holy virgins, and are presented for baptism by these persons, who neither have nor desire to have children of their own: and in this you behold precisely what was done in the case mentioned in the Gospel of the man wounded by thieves, and left half dead on the way, regarding whom the Lord asked who was neighbour to him, and received for answer: "He that showed mercy on him."[1]

7. That which you have placed at the end of your series of questions you have judged to be the most difficult, because of the jealous care with which you are wont to avoid whatever is false. You state it thus: "If I place before you an infant, and ask, 'Will this child when he grows up be chaste?' or 'Will he not be a thief?' you will reply, 'I know not.' If I ask, 'Is he in his present infantile condition thinking what is good or thinking what is evil?' you will reply, 'I know not.' If, therefore, you do not venture to take the responsibility of making any positive statement concerning either his conduct in after life or his thoughts at the time, what is that which parents do, when, in presenting their children for baptism, they as sureties (or sponsors) answer for the children, and say that they do that which at that age they are incapable even of understanding, or, at least, in regard to which their thoughts (if they can think) are hidden from us? For we ask those by whom the child is presented, 'Does he believe in God?' and though at that age the child does not so much as know that there is a God, the sponsors reply, 'He believes;' and in like manner answer is returned by them to each of the other questions. Now I am surprised that parents can in these things answer so confidently on the child's behalf as to say, at the time when they are answering the questions of the persons administering baptism, that the

[1] Luke x. 37.

infant is doing what is so remarkable and so excellent; and yet if at the same hour I were to add such questions as, 'Will the child who is now being baptized be chaste when he grows up? Will he not be a thief?' probably no one would presume to answer, 'He will' or 'He will not,' although there is no hesitation in giving the answer that the child believes in God, and turns himself to God." Thereafter you add this sentence in conclusion: "To these questions I pray you to condescend to give me a short reply, not silencing me by the traditional authority of custom, but satisfying me by arguments addressed to my reason."

8. While reading this letter of yours over and over again, and pondering its contents so far as my limited time permitted, memory recalled to me my friend Nebridius, who, while he was a most diligent and eager student of difficult problems, especially in the department of Christian doctrine, had an extreme aversion to the giving of a short answer to a great question. If any one insisted upon this, he was exceedingly displeased; and if he was not prevented by respect for the age or rank of the person, he indignantly rebuked such a questioner by stern looks and words; for he considered him unworthy to be investigating matters such as these, who did not know how much both might be said and behoved to be said on a subject of great importance. But I do not lose patience with you, as he was wont to do when one asked a brief reply; for you are, as I am, a bishop engrossed with many cares, and therefore have not leisure for reading any more than I have leisure for writing any prolix communication. He was then a young man, who was not satisfied with short statements on subjects of this kind, and being then himself at leisure, addressed his questions concerning the many topics discussed in our conversations to one who was also at leisure; whereas you, having regard to the circumstances both of yourself the questioner, and of me from whom you demand the reply, insist upon my giving you a short answer to the weighty question which you propound. Well, I shall do my best to satisfy you; the Lord help me to accomplish what you require.

9. You know that in ordinary parlance we often say, when Easter is approaching, "To-morrow or the day after is the

Lord's Passion," although He suffered so many years ago, and His passion was endured once for all time. In like manner, on Easter Sunday we say, "This day the Lord rose from the dead," although so many years have passed since His resurrection. But no one is so foolish as to accuse us of falsehood when we use these phrases, for this reason, that we give such names to these days on the ground of a likeness between them and the days on which the events referred to actually transpired, the day being called the day of that event, although it is not the very day on which the event took place, but one corresponding to it by the revolution of the same time of the year, and the event itself being said to take place on that day, because, although it really took place long before, it is on that day sacramentally celebrated. Was not Christ once for all offered up in His own person as a sacrifice? and yet, is He not likewise offered up in the sacrament as a sacrifice, not only in the special solemnities of Easter, but also daily among our congregations; so that the man who, being questioned, answers that He is offered as a sacrifice in that ordinance, declares what is strictly true? For if sacraments had not some points of real resemblance to the things of which they are the sacraments, they would not be sacraments at all. In most cases, moreover, they do in virtue of this likeness bear the names of the realities which they resemble. As, therefore, in a certain manner the sacrament of Christ's body is Christ's body, and the sacrament of Christ's blood is Christ's blood,[1] in the same manner the sacrament of faith is faith. Now believing is nothing else than having faith; and accordingly, when, on behalf of an infant as yet incapable of exercising faith, the answer is given that he believes, this answer means that he has faith because of the sacrament of faith, and in like manner the answer is made that he turns himself to God because of the sacrament of conversion, since the answer itself belongs to the celebration of the sacrament. Thus the apostle says, in regard to this sacrament of Baptism: "We

[1] As this is an important sentence, we give the original words: Sicut ergo secundum quemdam modum sacramentum corporis Christi corpus Christi est, sacramentum sanguinis Christi sanguis Christi est, ita sacramentum fidei fides est.

are buried with Christ by baptism into death."[1] He does not say, "We have signified our being buried with Him," but "We have been buried with Him." He has therefore given to the sacrament pertaining to so great a transaction no other name than the word describing the transaction itself.

10. Therefore an infant, although he is not yet a believer in the sense of having that faith which includes the consenting will of those who exercise it, nevertheless becomes a believer through the sacrament of that faith. For as it is answered that he believes, so also he is called a believer, not because he assents to the truth by an act of his own judgment, but because he receives the sacrament of that truth. When, however, he begins to have the discretion of manhood, he will not repeat the sacrament, but understand its meaning, and become conformed to the truth which it contains, with his will also consenting. During the time in which he is by reason of youth unable to do this, the sacrament will avail for his protection against adverse powers, and will avail so much on his behalf, that if before he arrives at the use of reason he depart from this life, he is delivered by Christian help, namely, by the love of the Church commending him through this sacrament unto God, from that condemnation which by one man entered into the world.[2] He who does not believe this, and thinks that it is impossible, is assuredly an unbeliever, although he may have received the sacrament of faith; and far before him in merit is the infant which, though not yet possessing a faith helped by the understanding, is not obstructing faith by any antagonism of the understanding, and therefore receives with profit the sacrament of faith.

I have answered your questions, as it seems to me, in a manner which, if I were dealing with persons of weaker capacity and disposed to gainsaying, would be inadequate, but which is perhaps more than sufficient to satisfy peaceable and sensible persons. Moreover, I have not urged in my defence the mere fact that the custom is thoroughly established, but have to the best of my ability advanced reasons in support of it as fraught with very abundant blessing.

[1] Rom. vi. 4. [2] Rom. v. 12.

LETTER XCIX.

(A.D. 408 OR BEGINNING OF 409.)

TO THE VERY DEVOUT ITALICA, AN HANDMAID OF GOD, PRAISED JUSTLY AND PIOUSLY BY THE MEMBERS OF CHRIST, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. Up to the time of my writing this reply, I had received three letters from your Grace, of which the first asked urgently a letter from me, the second intimated that what I wrote in answer had reached you, and the third, which conveyed the assurance of your most benevolent solicitude for our interest in the matter of the house belonging to that most illustrious and distinguished young man Julian, which is in immediate contact with the walls of our Church. To this last letter, just now received, I lose no time in promptly replying, because your Excellency's agent has written to me that he can send my letter without delay to Rome. By his letter we have been greatly distressed, because he has taken pains to acquaint us [1] with the things which are taking place in the city (Rome) or around its walls, so as to give us reliable information concerning that which we were reluctant to believe on the authority of vague rumours. In the letters which were sent to us previously by our brethren, tidings were given to us of events, vexatious and grievous, it is true, but much less calamitous than those of which we now hear. I am surprised beyond expression that my brethren the holy bishops did not write to me when so favourable an opportunity of sending a letter by your messengers occurred, and that your own letter conveyed to us no information concerning such painful tribulation as has befallen you,—tribulation which, by reason of the tender sympathies of Christian charity, is ours as well as yours. I suppose, however, that you deemed it better not to mention these sorrows, because

[1] Tillemont (vol. xiii. note 44) conjectures that the word "non" before "nobis insinuare curavit" should not be in the text,—a conjecture which commends itself to our judgment, though it is unsupported by MSS.

The calamities referred to are the events connected with the siege of Rome by Alaric in the end of 408.

you considered that this could do no good, or because you did not wish to make us sad by your letter. But in my opinion, it does some good to acquaint us even with such events as these: in the first place, because it is not right to be ready to "rejoice with them that rejoice," but refuse to "weep with them that weep;" and in the second place, because "tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."[1]

2. Far be it, therefore, from us to refuse to hear even of the bitter and sorrowful things which befall those who are very dear to us! For in some way which I cannot explain, the pain suffered by one member is mitigated when all the other members suffer with it.[2] And this mitigation is effected not by actual participation in the calamity, but by the solacing power of love; for although only some suffer the actual burden of the affliction, and the others share their suffering through knowing what these have to bear, nevertheless the tribulation is borne in common by them all, seeing that they have in common the same experience, hope, and love, and the same Divine Spirit. Moreover, the Lord provides consolation for us all, inasmuch as He hath both forewarned us of these temporal afflictions, and promised to us after them eternal blessings; and the soldier who desires to receive a crown when the conflict is over, ought not to lose courage while the conflict lasts, since He who is preparing rewards ineffable for those who overcome, does Himself minister strength to them while they are on the field of battle.

3. Let not what I have now written take away your confidence in writing to me, especially since the reason which may be pled for your endeavouring to lessen our fears is one which cannot be condemned. We salute in return your little children, and we desire that they may be spared to you, and may grow up in Christ, since they discern even in their present tender age how dangerous and baneful is the love of this world. God grant that the plants which are small and

[1] Rom. xii. 15 and v. 3–5. [2] 1 Cor. xii. 26.

still flexible may be bent in the right direction in a time in which the great and hardy are being shaken. As to the house of which you speak, what can I say beyond expressing my gratitude for your very kind solicitude? For the house which we can give they do not wish; and the house which they wish we cannot give, for it was not left to the church by my predecessor, as they have been falsely informed, but is one of the ancient properties of the church, and it is attached to the one ancient church in the same way as the house about which this question has been raised is attached to the other.[1]

LETTER C.

(A.D. 409.)

TO DONATUS, HIS NOBLE AND DESERVEDLY HONOURABLE LORD, AND EMINENTLY PRAISEWORTHY SON, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. I WOULD indeed that the African Church were not placed in such trying circumstances as to need the aid of any earthly power. But since, as the apostle says, "there is no power but of God,"[2] it is unquestionable that, when by you the sincere sons of your Catholic Mother help is given to her, our help is in the name of the Lord, "who made heaven and earth."[3] For oh, noble and deservedly honourable lord, and eminently praiseworthy son, who does not perceive that in the midst of so great calamities no small consolation has been bestowed upon us by God, in that you, such a man, and so devoted to the name of Christ, have been raised to the dignity of proconsul, so that power allied with your goodwill may restrain the enemies of the Church from their wicked and sacrilegious attempts? In fact, there is only one thing of which we are much afraid in your administration of justice, viz., lest perchance, seeing that every injury done by impious and ungrateful men against the Christian society is a more serious and heinous crime than if it had been done against others, you

[1] We have no further information regarding this affair. The prospect of an amicable settlement seems remote.

[2] Rom. xiii. 1. [3] Ps. cxxiv. 8.

should on this ground consider that it ought to be punished with a severity corresponding to the enormity of the crime, and not with the moderation which is suitable to Christian forbearance. We beseech you, in the name of Jesus Christ, not to act in this manner. For we do not seek to revenge ourselves in this world; nor ought the things which we suffer to reduce us to such distress of mind as to leave no room in our memory for the precepts in regard to this which we have received from Him for whose truth and in whose name we suffer; we "love our enemies," and we "pray for them."[1] It is not their death, but their deliverance from error, that we seek to accomplish by the help of the terror of judges and of laws, whereby they may be preserved from falling under the penalty of eternal judgment; we do not wish either to see the exercise of discipline towards them neglected, or, on the other hand, to see them subjected to the severer punishments which they deserve. Do you, therefore, check their sins in such a way, that the sinners may be spared to repent of their sins.

2. We beg you, therefore, when you are pronouncing judgment in cases affecting the Church, how wicked soever the injuries may be which you shall ascertain to have been attempted or inflicted on the Church, to forget that you have the power of capital punishment, and not to forget our request. Nor let it appear to you an unimportant matter and beneath your notice, my most beloved and honoured son, that we ask you to spare the lives of the men on whose behalf we ask God to grant them repentance. For even granting that we ought never to deviate from a fixed purpose of overcoming evil with good, let your own wisdom take this also into consideration, that no person beyond those who belong to the Church is at pains to bring before you cases pertaining to her interests. If, therefore, your opinion be, that death must be the punishment of men convicted of these crimes, you will deter us from endeavouring to bring anything of this kind before your tribunal; and this being discovered, they will proceed with more unrestrained boldness to accomplish speedily our destruction, when upon us is imposed and enjoined the necessity of choosing rather to suffer death at their hands,

[1] Matt. v. 44.

than to bring them to death by accusing them at your bar. Disdain not, I beseech you, to accept this suggestion, petition, and entreaty from me. For I do not think that you are unmindful that I might have great boldness in addressing you, even were I not a bishop, and even though your rank were much above what you now hold. Meanwhile, let the Donatist heretics learn at once through the edict of your Excellency that the laws passed against their error, which they suppose and boastfully declare to be repealed, are still in force, although even when they know this they may not be able to refrain in the least degree from injuring us. You will, however, most effectively help us to secure the fruit of our labours and dangers, if you take care that the imperial laws for the restraining of their sect, which is full of conceit and of impious pride, be so used that they may not appear either to themselves or to others to be suffering hardship in any form for the sake of truth and righteousness; but suffer them, when this is requested at your hands, to be convinced and instructed by incontrovertible proofs of things which are most certain, in public proceedings in the presence of your Excellency or of inferior judges, in order that those who are arrested by your command may themselves incline their stubborn will to the better part, and may read these things profitably to others of their party. For the pains bestowed are burdensome rather than really useful, when men are only compelled, not persuaded by instruction, to forsake a great evil and lay hold upon a great benefit.

LETTER CI.

(A.D. 409.)

TO MEMOR,[1] MY LORD MOST BLESSED, AND WITH ALL VENERATION MOST BELOVED, MY BROTHER AND COLLEAGUE SINCERELY LONGED FOR, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. I OUGHT not to write any letter to your holy Charity, without sending at the same time those books which by the irresistible plea of holy love you have demanded from me,

[1] We regard Memori, not Memorio, as the true reading.

that at least by this act of obedience I might reply to those letters by which you have put on me a high honour indeed, but also a heavy load. Albeit, while I bend because of the load, I am raised up because of your love. For it is not by an ordinary man that I am loved and raised up and made to stand erect, but by a man who is a priest of the Lord, and whom I know to be so accepted before Him, that when you raise to the Lord your good heart, having me in your heart, you raise me with yourself to Him. I ought, therefore, to have sent at this time those books which I had promised to revise. The reason why I have not sent them is that I have not revised them, and this not because I was unwilling, but because I was unable, having been occupied with many very urgent cares. But it would have shown inexcusable ingratitude and hardness of heart to have permitted the bearer, my holy colleague and brother Possidius, in whom you will find one who is very much the same as myself, either to miss becoming acquainted with you, who love me so much, or to come to know you without any letter from me. For he is one who has been by my labours nourished, not in those studies which men who are the slaves of every kind of passion call liberal, but with the Lord's bread, in so far as this could be supplied to him from my scanty store.

2. For to men who, though they are unjust and impious, imagine that they are well educated in the liberal arts, what else ought we to say than what we read in those writings which truly merit the name of liberal,—"if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."[1] For it is through Him that men come to know, even in those studies which are termed liberal by those who have not been called to this true liberty, anything in them which deserves the name. For they have nothing which is consonant with liberty, except that which in them is consonant with truth; for which reason the Son Himself hath said: "The truth shall make you free."[2] The freedom which is our privilege has therefore nothing in common with the innumerable and impious fables with which the verses of silly poets are full, nor with the fulsome and

[1] John viii. 36. [2] John viii. 38.

highly-polished falsehoods of their orators, nor, in fine, with the rambling subtleties of philosophers themselves, who either did not know anything of God, or when they knew God, did not glorify Him as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; so that, professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts, and to creeping things, or who, though not wholly or at all devoted to the worship of images, nevertheless worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator.[1] Far be it, therefore, from us to admit that the epithet liberal is justly bestowed on the lying vanities and hallucinations, or empty trifles and conceited errors of those men—unhappy men, who knew not the grace of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, by which alone we are "delivered from the body of this death,"[2] and who did not even perceive the measure of truth which was in the things which they knew. Their historical works, the writers of which profess to be chiefly concerned to be accurate in narrating events, may perhaps, I grant, contain some things worthy of being known by "free" men, since the narration is true, whether the subject described in it be the good or the evil in human experience. At the same time, I can by no means see how men who were not aided in their knowledge by the Holy Spirit, and who were obliged to gather floating rumours under the limitations of human infirmity, could avoid being misled in regard to very many things; nevertheless, if they have no intention of deceiving, and do not mislead other men otherwise than so far as they have themselves, through human infirmity, fallen into a mistake, there is in such writings an approach to liberty.

3. Forasmuch, however, as the powers belonging to numbers[3] in all kinds of movements are most easily studied as they are presented in sounds, and this study furnishes a way of rising to the higher secrets of truth, by paths gradually ascending, so to speak, in which Wisdom pleasantly reveals herself, and in every step of providence meets those who love her,[4] I

[1] Rom. i. 21–25.
[2] Rom. vii. 24, 25.
[3] Quid numeri valeant.
[4] Wisd. vi. 17.

desired, when I began to have leisure for study, and my mind was not engaged by greater and more important cares, to exercise myself by writing those books which you have requested me to send. I then wrote six books on rhythm alone, and proposed, I may add, to write other six on music,[1] as I at that time expected to have leisure. But from the time that the burden of ecclesiastical cares was laid upon me, all these recreations have passed from my hand so completely, that now, when I cannot but respect your wish and command, —for it is more than a request,—I have difficulty in even finding what I had written. If, however, I had it in my power to send you that treatise, it would occasion regret, not to me that I had obeyed your command, but to you that you had so urgently insisted upon its being sent. For five books of it are all but unintelligible, unless one be at hand who can in reading not only distinguish the part belonging to each of those between whom the discussion is maintained, but also mark by enunciation the time which the syllables should occupy, so that their distinctive measures may be expressed and strike the ear, especially because in some places there occur pauses of measured length, which of course must escape notice, unless the reader inform the hearer of them by intervals of silence where they occur.

4. The sixth book, however, which I have found already revised, and in which the product of the other five is contained, I have not delayed to send to your Charity; it may, perhaps, be not wholly unsuited to one of your venerable age.[2] As to the other five books, they seem to me scarcely worthy of being known and read by Julian,[3] our son, and now our colleague, for, as a deacon, he is engaged in the same warfare with ourselves. Of him I dare not say, for it would not be true, that I love him more than I love you; yet this I may say, that I long for him more than for you. It may seem strange, that when I love both equally, I long more ardently for the one than the other; but the cause of the difference is, that I have greater hope of seeing him; for I think that if ordered or sent by you he come to us, he will both be doing

[1] De melo. [2] Gravitatem tuam.

[3] Julian, son of Memor, afterwards a leading supporter of the Pelagian heresy.

what is suitable to one of his years, especially as he is not yet hindered by weightier responsibilities, and he will more speedily bring yourself to me.

I have not stated in this treatise the kinds of metre in which the lines of David's Psalms are composed, because I do not know them. For it was not possible for any one, in translating these from the Hebrew (of which language I know nothing), to preserve the metre at the same time, lest by the exigencies of the measure he should be compelled to depart from accurate translation further than was consistent with the meaning of the sentences. Nevertheless, I believe, on the testimony of those who are acquainted with that language, that they are composed in certain varieties of metre; for that holy man loved sacred music, and has more than any other kindled in me a passion for its study.

May the shadow of the wings of the Most High be for ever the dwelling-place[1] of you all, who with oneness of heart occupy one home,[2] father and mother, bound in the same brotherhood with your sons, being all the children of the one Father. Remember us.

LETTER CII.

(A.D. 409.)

TO DEOGRATIAS, MY BROTHER IN ALL SINCERITY, AND MY FELLOW-PRESBYTER, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. In choosing to refer to me questions which were submitted to yourself for solution, you have not done so, I suppose, from indolence, but because, loving me more than I deserve, you prefer to hear through me even those things which you already know quite well. I would rather, however, that the answers were given by yourself, because the friend who proposed the questions seems to be shy of following advice from me, if I may judge from the fact that he has written no reply to a letter of mine, for what reason he knows best. I suspect this, however, and there is neither ill-will nor absurdity in the suspicion; for you also know very well how much I love him,

[1] Ps. xci. 1. [2] Ps. lxviii. 6, Septuagint.

and how great is my grief that he is not yet a Christian; and it is not unreasonable to think that one whom I see unwilling to answer my letters is not willing to have anything written by me to him. I therefore implore you to comply with a request of mine, seeing that I have been obedient to you, and, notwithstanding most engrossing duties, have feared to disappoint the wish of one so dear to me by declining to comply with your request. What I ask is this, that you do not refuse yourself to give an answer to all his questions, seeing that, as you have told me, he begged this from you; and it is a task to which, even before receiving this letter, you were competent; for when you have read this letter, you will see that scarcely anything has been said by me which you did not already know, or which you could not have come to know though I had been silent. This work of mine, therefore, I beg you to keep for the use of yourself and of all other persons whose desire for instruction you deem it suited to satisfy. But as for the treatise of your own composition which I demand from you, give it to him to whom this treatise is most specially adapted, and not to him only, but also all others who find exceedingly acceptable such statements concerning these things as you are able to make, among whom I number myself. May you live always in Christ, and remember me.

2. QUESTION I. Concerning the resurrection. This question perplexes some, and they ask, Which of two kinds of resurrection corresponds to that which is promised to us? is it that of Christ, or that of Lazarus? They say, "If the former, how can this correspond with the resurrection of those who have been born by ordinary generations, seeing that He was not thus born?[1] If, on the other hand, the resurrection of Lazarus is said to correspond to ours, here also there seems to be a discrepancy, since the resurrection of Lazarus was accomplished in the case of a body not yet dissolved, but the same body in which he was known by the name of Lazarus; whereas ours is to be rescued after many centuries from the mass in which it has ceased to be distinguishable from other things. Again, if our state after the resurrection is one of blessedness, in which the body shall be exempt from every kind of wound,

[1] Qui nullâ seminis conditione natus est.

and from the pain of hunger, what is meant by the statement that Christ took food, and showed his wounds after His resurrection? For if He did it to convince the doubting, when the wounds were not real, He practised on them a deception; whereas, if He showed them what was real, it follows that wounds received by the body shall remain in the state which is to ensue after resurrection."

3. To this I answer, that the resurrection of Christ and not of Lazarus corresponds to that which is promised, because Lazarus was so raised that he died a second time, whereas of Christ it is written: "Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him."[1] The same is promised to those who shall rise at the end of the world, and shall reign for ever with Christ. As to the difference in the manner of Christ's generation and that of other men, this has no bearing upon the nature of His resurrection, just as it had none upon the nature of His death, so as to make it different from ours. His death was not the less real because of His not having been begotten by an earthly father; just as the difference between the mode of the origination of the body of the first man, who was formed immediately from the dust of the earth, and of our bodies, which we derive from our parents, made no such difference as that his death should be of another kind than ours. As, therefore, difference in the mode of birth does not make any difference in the nature of death, neither does it make any difference in the nature of resurrection.

4. But lest the men who doubt this should, with similar scepticism, refuse to accept as true what is written concerning the first man's creation, let them inquire or observe, if they can at least believe this, how numerous are the species of animals which are born from the earth without deriving their life from parents, but which by ordinary procreation reproduce offspring like themselves, and in which, notwithstanding the different mode of origination, the nature of the parents born from the earth and of the offspring born from them is the same; for they live alike and they die alike, although born in different ways. There is therefore no absurdity in the

[1] Rom. vi. 9.

statement that bodies dissimilar in their origination are alike in their resurrection. But men of this kind, not being competent to discern in what respect any diversity between things affects or does not affect them, so soon as they discover any unlikeness between things in their original formation, contend that in all that follows the same unlikeness must still exist. Such men may as reasonably suppose that oil made from fat should not float on the surface in water as olive oil does, because the origin of the two oils is so different, the one being from the fruit of a tree, the other from the flesh of an animal.

5. Again, as to the alleged difference in regard to the resurrection of Christ's body and of ours, that His was raised on the third day not dissolved by decay and corruption, whereas ours shall be fashioned again after a long time, and out of the mass into which undistinguished they shall have been resolved,—both of these things are impossible for man to do, but to divine power both are most easy. For as the glance of the eye does not come more quickly to objects which are at hand, and more slowly to objects more remote, but darts to either distance with equal swiftness, so, when the resurrection of the dead is accomplished "in the twinkling of an eye,"[1] it is as easy for the omnipotence of God and for the ineffable expression of His will[2] to raise again bodies which have by long lapse of time been dissolved, as to raise those which have recently fallen under the stroke of death. These things are to some men incredible because they transcend their experience, although all nature is full of wonders so numerous, that they do not seem to us to be wonderful, and are therefore accounted unworthy of attentive study or investigation, not because our faculties can easily comprehend them, but because we are so accustomed to see them. For myself, and for all who along with me labour to understand the invisible things of God by means of the things which are made,[3] I may say that we are filled not less, perhaps even more, with wonder by the fact, that in one grain of seed, so insignificant, there lies bound up as it were all that we praise in the stately tree, than by the fact that the bosom of

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 52. [2] Ineffabili nutui. [3] Rom. i. 20.

this earth, so vast, shall restore entire and perfect to the future resurrection all those elements of human bodies which it is now receiving when they are dissolved.

6. Again, what contradiction is there between the fact that Christ partook of food after His resurrection, and the doctrine that in the promised resurrection-state there shall be no need of food, when we read that angels also have partaken of food of the same kind and in the same way, not in empty and illusive simulation, but in unquestionable reality; not, however, under the pressure of necessity, but in the free exercise of their power? For water is absorbed in one way by the thirsting earth, in another way by the glowing sunbeams; in the former we see the effect of poverty, in the latter of power. Now the body of that future resurrection-state shall be imperfect in its felicity if it be incapable of taking food; imperfect, also, if, on the other hand, it be dependent on food. I might here enter on a fuller discussion concerning the changes possible in the qualities of bodies, and the dominion which belongs to higher bodies over those which are of inferior nature; but I have resolved to make my reply short, and I write this for minds so endowed that the simple suggestion of the truth is enough for them.

7. Let him who proposed these questions know by all means that Christ did, after His resurrection, show the scars of His wounds, not the wounds themselves, to disciples who doubted; for whose sake, also, it pleased Him to take food and drink more than once, lest they should suppose that His body was not real, but that He was a spirit, appearing to them as a phantom, and not a substantial form. These scars would indeed have been mere illusive appearances if no wounds had gone before; yet even the scars would not have remained if He had willed it otherwise. But it pleased Him to retain them with a definite purpose, namely, that to those whom He was building up in faith unfeigned He might show that one body had not been substituted for another, but that the body which they had seen nailed to the cross had risen again. What reason is there, then, for saying, "If He did this to convince the doubting, He practised a deception"? Suppose that a brave man, who had received many wounds in confronting

the enemy when fighting for his country, were to say to a physician of extraordinary skill, who was able so to heal these wounds as to leave not a scar visible, that he would prefer to be healed in such a way that the traces of the wounds should remain on his body as tokens of the honours he had won, would you, in such a case, say that the physician practised deception, because, though he might by his art make the scars wholly disappear, he did by the same art, for a definite reason, rather cause them to continue as they were? The only ground upon which the scars could be proved to be a deception would be, as I have already said, if no wounds had been healed in the places where they were seen.

8. QUESTION II. Concerning the epoch of the Christian religion, they have advanced, moreover, some other things, which they might call a selection of the more weighty arguments of Porphyry against the Christians: "If Christ," they say, "declares Himself to be the Way of salvation, the Grace and the Truth, and affirms that in Him alone, and only to souls believing in Him, is the way of return to God,[1] what has become of men who lived in the many centuries before Christ came? To pass over the time," he adds, "which preceded the founding of the kingdom of Latium, let us take the beginning of that power as if it were the beginning of the human race. In Latium itself gods were worshipped before Alba was built; in Alba, also, religious rites and forms of worship in the temples were maintained. Rome itself was for a period of not less duration, even for a long succession of centuries, unacquainted with Christian doctrine. What, then, has become of such an innumerable multitude of souls, who were in no wise blameworthy, seeing that He in whom alone saving faith can be exercised had not yet favoured men with His advent? The whole world, moreover, was not less zealous than Rome itself in the worship practised in the temples of the gods. Why, then," he asks, "did He who is called the Saviour withhold Himself for so many centuries of the world? And let it not be said," he adds, "that provision had been made for the human race by the old Jewish law. It was only after a long time that the Jewish law appeared

[1] John xiv. 6.

and flourished within the narrow limits of Syria, and after that, it gradually crept onwards to the coasts of Italy; but this was not earlier than the end of the reign of Caius, or, at the earliest, while he was on the throne. What, then, became of the souls of men in Rome and Latium who lived before the time of the Cæsars, and were destitute of the grace of Christ, because He had not then come?"

9. To these statements we answer by requiring those who make them to tell us, in the first place, whether the sacred rites, which we know to have been introduced into the worship of their gods at times which can be ascertained, were or were not profitable to men. If they say that these were of no service for the salvation of men, they unite with us in putting them down, and confess that they were useless. We indeed prove that they were baneful; but it is an important concession that by them it is at least admitted that they were useless. If, on the other hand, they defend these rites, and maintain that they were wise and profitable institutions, what, I ask, has become of those who died before these were instituted? for they were defrauded of the saving and profitable efficacy which these possessed. If, however, it be said that they could be cleansed from guilt equally well in another way, why did not the same way continue in force for their posterity? What use was there for instituting novelties in worship?

10. If, in answer to this, they say that the gods themselves have indeed always existed, and were in all places alike powerful to give liberty to their worshippers, but were pleased to regulate the circumstances of time, place, and manner in which they were to be served, according to the variety found among things temporal and terrestrial, in such a way as they knew to be most suitable to certain ages and countries, why do they urge against the Christian religion this question, which, if it be asked in regard to their own gods, they either cannot themselves answer, or, if they can, must do so in such a way as to answer for our religion not less than their own? For what could they say but that the difference between sacraments which are adapted to different times and places is of no importance, if only that which is worshipped in them all be holy, just as the difference between sounds of words belonging

to different languages and adapted to different hearers is of no importance, if only that which is spoken be true; although in this respect there is a difference, that men can, by agreement among themselves, arrange as to the sounds of language by which they may communicate their thoughts to one another, but that those who have discerned what is right have been guided only by the will of God in regard to the sacred rites which were agreeable to the Divine Being. This divine will has never been wanting to the justice and piety of mortals for their salvation; and whatever varieties of worship there may have been in different nations bound together by one and the same religion, the most important thing to observe was this: how far, on the one hand, human infirmity was thereby encouraged to effort, or borne with, while, on the other hand, the divine authority was not assailed.

11. Wherefore, since we affirm that Christ is the Word of God, by whom all things were made, and is the Son, because He is the Word, not a word uttered and belonging to the past but abides unchangeably with the unchangeable Father, Himself unchangeable, under whose rule the whole universe, spiritual and material, is ordered in the way best adapted to different times and places, and that He has perfect wisdom and knowledge as to what should be done, and when and where everything should be done in the controlling and ordering of the universe,—most certainly, both before He gave being to the Hebrew nation, by which He was pleased, through sacraments suited to the time, to prefigure the manifestation of Himself in His advent, and during the time of the Jewish commonwealth, and, after that, when He manifested Himself in the likeness of mortals to mortal men in the body which He received from the Virgin, and thenceforward even to our day, in which He is fulfilling all which He predicted of old by the prophets, and from this present time on to the end of the world, when He shall separate the holy from the wicked, and give to every man his due recompence,—in all these successive ages He is the same Son of God, co-eternal with the Father, and the unchangeable Wisdom by whom universal nature was called into existence, and by participation in whom every rational soul is made blessed.

12. Therefore, from the beginning of the human race, whosoever believed in Him, and in any way knew Him, and lived in a pious and just manner according to His precepts, was undoubtedly saved by Him, in whatever time and place he may have lived. For as we believe in Him both as dwelling with the Father and as having come in the flesh, so the men of the former ages believed in Him both as dwelling with the Father and as destined to come in the flesh. And the nature of faith is not changed, nor is the salvation made different, in our age, by the fact that, in consequence of the difference between the two epochs, that which was then foretold as future is now proclaimed as past. Moreover, we are not under necessity to suppose different things and different kinds of salvation to be signified, when the self-same thing is by different sacred words and rites of worship announced in the one case as fulfilled, in the other as future. As to the manner and time, however, in which anything that pertains to the one salvation common to all believers and pious persons is brought to pass, let us ascribe wisdom to God, and for our part exercise submission to His will. Wherefore the true religion, although formerly set forth and practised under other names and with other symbolical rites than it now has, and formerly more obscurely revealed and known to fewer persons than now in the time of clearer light and wider diffusion, is one and the same in both periods.

13. Moreover, we do not raise any objection to their religion on the ground of the difference between the institutions appointed by Numa Pompilius for the worship of the gods by the Romans, and those which were up till that time practised in Rome or in other parts of Italy; nor on the fact that in the age of Pythagoras that system of philosophy became generally adopted which up to that time had no existence, or lay concealed, perhaps, among a very small number whose views were the same, but whose religious practice and worship was different: the question upon which we join issue with them is, whether these gods were true gods, or worthy of worship, and whether that philosophy was fitted to promote the salvation of the souls of men. This is what we insist upon discussing; and in discussing it we pluck up their sophistries by

the root. Let them, therefore, desist from bringing against us objections which are of equal force against every sect, and against religion of every name. For since, as they admit, the ages of the world do not roll on under the dominion of chance, but are controlled by divine Providence, what may be fitting and expedient in each successive age transcends the range of human understanding, and is determined by the same wisdom by which Providence cares for the universe.

14. For if they assert that the reason why the doctrine of Pythagoras has not prevailed always and universally is, that Pythagoras was but a man, and had not power to secure this, can they also affirm that in the age and in the countries in which his philosophy flourished, all who had the opportunity of hearing him were found willing to believe and follow him? And therefore it is the more certain that, if Pythagoras had possessed the power of publishing his doctrines where he pleased and when he pleased, and if he had also possessed along with that power a perfect foreknowledge of events, he would have presented himself only at those places and times in which he foreknew that men would believe his teaching. Wherefore, since they do not object to Christ on the ground of His doctrine not being universally embraced,—for they feel that this would be a futile objection if alleged either against the teaching of philosophers or against the majesty of their own gods,—what answer, I ask, could they make, if, leaving out of view that depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God within which it may be that some other divine purpose lies much more deeply hidden, and without prejudging the other reasons possibly existing, which are fit subjects for patient study by the wise, we confine ourselves, for the sake of brevity in this discussion, to the statement of this one position, that it pleased Christ to appoint the time in which He would appear and the persons among whom His doctrine was to be proclaimed, according to His knowledge of the times and places in which men would believe on Him?[1] For He foreknew,

[1] Augustine, having been informed by Hilary (*Ep.* 219) that this passage was quoted by Semipelagians in defence of their error, made the following remark on it in his work *De Prædestinatione Sanctorum*, c. ix: "Do you not observe that my design in this sentence was, without excluding the secret counsel of

regarding those ages and places in which His gospel has not been preached, that in them the gospel, if preached, would meet with such treatment from all, without exception, as it met with, not indeed from all, but from many, at the time of His personal presence on earth, who would not believe in Him, even though men were raised from the dead by Him; and such as we see it meet with in our day from many who, although the predictions of the prophets concerning Him are so manifestly fulfilled, still refuse to believe, and, misguided by the perverse subtlety of the human heart, rather resist than yield to divine authority, even when this is so clear and manifest, so glorious and so gloriously published abroad. So long as the mind of man is limited in capacity and in strength, it is his duty to yield to divine truth. Why, then, should we wonder if Christ knew that the world was so full of unbelievers in the former ages, that He righteously refused to manifest Himself or to be preached to those of whom He foreknew that they would not believe either His words or His miracles? For it is not incredible that all may have been then such as, to our amazement, so many have been from the time of His advent to the present time, and even now are.

15. And yet, from the beginning of the human race, He never ceased to speak by His prophets, at one time more obscurely, at another time more plainly, as seemed to divine wisdom best adapted to the time; nor were there ever wanting men who believed in Him, from Adam to Moses, and among the people of Israel itself, which was by a special mysterious

God and any other causes, to say, in reference to Christ's foreknowledge, what seemed sufficient to reduce to silence the unbelief of the Pagans by whom the objection had been raised? For what is more certain than this, that Christ foreknew who would believe in Him, and in what time and place they would live? But I did not deem it necessary, in that connection, to investigate and discuss the question as to this faith in Christ preached to them, whether they would have it of themselves or would receive it from God—in other words, whether God merely foreknew, or also predestinated them. The sentence, therefore, 'that it pleased Christ to appoint the time in which He would appear, and the persons among whom His doctrine was to be proclaimed, according to His knowledge of the times and places in which men would believe in Him,' might have been put thus: that it pleased Christ to appoint the time in which He would appear, and the persons among whom His doctrine was to be proclaimed, according to His knowledge of the times and places in which those would be found who had been chosen in Him before the foundation of the world."

appointment a prophetic nation, and among other nations before He came in the flesh. For seeing that in the sacred Hebrew books some are mentioned, even from Abraham's time, not belonging to his natural posterity nor to the people of Israel, and not proselytes added to that people, who were nevertheless partakers of this holy mystery,[1] why may we not believe that in other nations also, here and there, some more were found, although we do not read their names in these authoritative records? Thus the salvation provided by this religion, by which alone, as alone true, true salvation is truly promised, was never wanting to any one who was worthy of it, and he to whom it was wanting was not worthy of it.[2] And from the beginning of the human family, even to the end of time, it is preached, to some for their advantage, to some for their condemnation. Accordingly, those to whom it has not been preached at all are those who were foreknown as persons who would not believe; those to whom, notwithstanding the certainty that they would not believe, the salvation has been proclaimed are set forth as an example of the class of unbelievers; and those to whom, as persons who would believe, the truth is proclaimed are being prepared for the kingdom of heaven and for the society of the holy angels.

16. QUESTION III. Let us now look to the question which comes next in order. "They find fault," he says, "with the sacred ceremonies, the sacrificial victims, the burning of incense, and all the other parts of worship in our temples; and yet the same kind of worship had its origin in antiquity with themselves, or from the God whom they worship, for He is represented by them as having been in need of the first-fruits."

[1] Sacramenti.

[2] On these words Augustine remarks in his *Retractations*, Book II. ch. xxxi.: "This I said, not meaning that any one could be worthy through his own merit, but in the same sense as the apostle said, 'Not of works, but of Him that calleth; it was said unto her, "The elder shall serve the younger"' (Rom. ix. 11, 12),—a calling which he affirms to pertain to the purpose of God. For which reason he says, 'Not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace' (2 Tim. i. 9); and again, 'We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose' (Rom. viii. 28). Of which calling he says, 'That our God would count you worthy of this calling' (2 Thess. i. 11)."

17. This question is obviously founded upon the passage in our Scriptures in which it is written that Cain brought to God a gift from the fruits of the earth, but Abel brought a gift from the firstlings of the flock.[1] Our reply, therefore, is, that from this passage the more suitable inference to be drawn is, how ancient is the ordinance of sacrifice which the infallible and sacred writings declare to be due to no other than to the one true God; not because God needs our offerings, seeing that, in the same Scriptures, it is most clearly written, "I said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord, for Thou hast no need of my goods,"[2] but because, even in the acceptance or rejection or appropriation of these offerings, He considers the advantage of men, and of them alone. For in worshipping God we do good to ourselves, not to Him. When, therefore, He gives an inspired revelation, and teaches how He is to be worshipped, He does this not only from no sense of need on His part, but from a regard to our highest advantage. For all such sacrifices are significant, being symbols of certain things by which we ought to be roused to search or know or recollect the things which they symbolize. To discuss this subject satisfactorily would demand of us something more than the short discourse in which we have resolved to give our reply at this time, more particularly because in other treatises we have spoken of it fully.[3] Those also who have before us expounded the divine oracles, have spoken largely of the symbols of the sacrifices of the Old Testament as shadows and figures of things then future.

18. With all our desire, however, to be brief, this one thing we must by no means omit to remark, that the false gods, that is to say, the demons, which are lying angels, would never have required a temple, priesthood, sacrifice, and the other things connected with these from their worshippers, whom they deceive, had they not known that these things were due to the one true God. When, therefore, these things are presented to God according to His inspiration and teaching, it is true religion; but when they are given to demons in

[1] Gen. iv. 3, 4.

[2] Ps. xvi. 2: ὅτι τῶν ἀγαθῶν μου οὐ χρείαν ἔχεις, LXX.

[3] *E.g.*, in the reply to Faustus, Book xxii.—See vol. v. p. 411.

compliance with their impious pride, it is baneful superstition. Accordingly, those who know the Christian Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testaments do not blame the profane rites of Pagans on the mere ground of their building temples, appointing priests, and offering sacrifices, but on the ground of their doing all this for idols and demons. As to idols, indeed, who entertains a doubt as to their being wholly devoid of perception? And yet, when they are placed in these temples and set on high upon thrones of honour, that they may be waited upon by suppliants and worshippers praying and offering sacrifices, even these idols, though devoid both of feeling and of life, do, by the mere image of the members and senses of beings endowed with life, so affect weak minds, that they appear to live and breathe, especially under the added influence of the profound veneration with which the multitude freely renders such costly service.

19. To these morbid and pernicious affections of the mind divine Scripture applies a remedy, by repeating, with the impressiveness of wholesome admonition, a familiar fact, in the words, "Eyes have they, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not,"[1] etc. For these words, by reason of their being so plain, and commending themselves to all people as true, are the more effective in striking salutary shame into those who, when they present divine worship before such images with religious fear, and look upon their likeness to living beings while they are venerating and worshipping them, and utter petitions, offer sacrifices, and perform vows before them as if present, are so completely overcome, that they do not presume to think of them as devoid of perception. Lest, moreover, these worshippers should think that our Scriptures intend only to declare that such affections of the human heart spring naturally from the worship of idols, it is written in the plainest terms, "All the gods of the nations are devils."[2] And therefore, also, the teaching of the apostles not only declares, as we read in John, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols,"[3] but also, in the words of Paul, "What say I then? that the idol is anything, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything? But I say, that the things which the Gen-

[1] Ps. cxv. 5, 6. [2] Ps. xcvi. 5: δαιμόνια, LXX. [3] 1 John v. 21.

tiles sacrifice they sacrifice to devils, and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils."[1] From which it may be clearly understood, that what is condemned in heathen superstitions by the true religion is not the mere offering of sacrifices (for the ancient saints offered these to the true God), but the offering of sacrifices to false gods and to impious demons. For as the truth counsels men to seek the fellowship of the holy angels, in like manner impiety turns men aside to the fellowship of the wicked angels, for whose associates everlasting fire is prepared, as the eternal kingdom is prepared for the associates of the holy angels.

20. The heathen find a plea for their profane rites and their idols in the fact that they interpret with ingenuity what is signified by each of them; but the plea is of no avail. For all this interpretation relates to the creature, not to the Creator, to whom alone is due that religious service which is in the Greek language distinguished by the word λατρεία. Neither do we say that the earth, the seas, the heaven, the sun, the moon, the stars, and any other celestial influences which may be beyond our ken are demons; but since all created things are divided into material and immaterial, the latter of which we also call spiritual, it is manifest that what is done by us under the power of piety and religion proceeds from the faculty of our souls known as the will, which belongs to the spiritual creation, and is therefore to be preferred to all that is material. Whence it is inferred that sacrifice must not be offered to anything material. There remains, therefore, the spiritual part of creation, which is either pious or impious, —the pious consisting of men and angels who are righteous, and who duly serve God; the impious consisting of wicked men and angels, whom we also call devils. Now, that sacrifice must not be offered to a spiritual creature, though righteous, is obvious from this consideration, that the more pious and submissive to God any creature is, the less does he presume to aspire to that honour which he knows to be due to God alone. How much worse, therefore, is it to sacrifice to devils, that is, to a wicked spiritual creature, which, dwelling in this comparatively dark heaven nearest to earth, as in the prison assigned

[1] 1 Cor. x. 19, 20.

to him in the air, is doomed to eternal punishment. Wherefore, even when men say that they are offering sacrifices to the higher celestial powers, which are not devils, and imagine that the only difference between us and them is in a name, because they call them gods and we call them angels, the only beings which really present themselves to these men, who are given over to be the sport of manifold deceptions, are the devils who find delight and, in a sense, nourishment in the errors of mankind. For the holy angels do not approve of any sacrifice except what is offered, agreeably to the teaching of true wisdom and true religion, unto the one true God, whom in holy fellowship they serve. Therefore, as impious presumption, whether in men or in angels, commands or covets the rendering to itself of those honours which belong to God, so, on the other hand, pious humility, whether in men or in holy angels, declines these honours when offered, and declares to whom alone they are due, of which most notable examples are conspicuously set forth in our sacred books.

21. In the sacrifices appointed by the divine oracles there has been a diversity of institution corresponding to the age in which they were observed. Some sacrifices were offered before the actual manifestation of that new covenant, the benefits of which are provided by the one true offering of the one Priest, namely, by the shed blood of Christ; and another sacrifice, adapted to this manifestation, and offered in the present age by us who are called Christians after the name of Him who has been revealed, is set before us not only in the gospels, but also in the prophetic books. For a change, not of the God who is worshipped, nor of the religion itself, but of sacrifices and of sacraments, would seem to be proclaimed without warrant now, if it had not been foretold in the earlier dispensation. For just as when the same man brings to God in the morning one kind of offering, and in the evening another, according to the time of day, he does not thereby change either his God or his religion, any more than he changes the nature of a salutation who uses one form of salutation in the morning and another in the evening: so, in the complete cycle of the ages, when one kind of offering is known to have been made by the ancient saints, and another is presented by the

saints in our time, this only shows that these sacred mysteries are celebrated not according to human presumption, but by divine authority, in the manner best adapted to the times. There is here no change either in the Deity or in the religion.

22. QUESTION IV. Let us, in the next place, consider what he has laid down concerning the proportion between sin and punishment when, misrepresenting the gospel, he says: "Christ threatens eternal punishment to those who do not believe in Him;"[1] and yet He says in another place, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."[2] "Here," he remarks, "is something sufficiently absurd and contradictory; for if He is to award punishment according to measure, and all measure is limited by the end of time, what mean these threats of eternal punishment?"

23. It is difficult to believe that this question has been put in the form of objection by one claiming to be in any sense a philosopher; for he says, "All measure is limited by time," as if men were accustomed to no other measures than measures of time, such as hours and days and years, or such as are referred to when we say that the time of a short syllable is one-half of that of a long syllable.[3] For I suppose that bushels and firkins, urns and amphoræ, are not measures of time. How, then, is all measure limited by time? Do not the heathen themselves affirm that the sun is eternal? And yet they presume to calculate and pronounce on the basis of geometrical measurements what is the proportion between it and the earth. Whether this calculation be within or beyond their power, it is certain, notwithstanding, that it has a disc of definite dimensions. For if they do ascertain how large it is, they know its dimensions, and if they do not succeed in their investigation, they do not know these; but the fact that men cannot discover them is no proof that they do not exist. It is possible, therefore, for something to be eternal, and nevertheless to have a definite measure of its proportions. In this I have been speaking upon the assumption of their own view as to the eternal duration of the sun, in order that they may

[1] John iii. 18. [2] Matt. vii. 2.

[3] "Longam syllabam esse duorum temporum brevem unius etiam pueri sciunt."—Quintil. ix. 4, 47.

be convinced by one of their own tenets, and obliged to admit that something may be eternal and at the same time measurable. And therefore let them not think that the threatening of Christ concerning eternal punishment is not to be believed because of His also saying, "In what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you."

24. For if He had said, "That which you have measured shall be measured unto you," even in that case it would not have been necessary to take the clauses as referring to something which was in all respects the same. For we may correctly say, That which you have planted you shall reap, although men plant not fruit but trees, and reap not trees but fruit. We say it, however, with reference to the kind of tree; for a man does not plant a fig-tree, and expect to gather nuts from it. In like manner it might be said, What you have done you shall suffer; not meaning that if one has committed adultery, for example, he shall suffer the same, but that what he has in that crime done to the law, the law shall do unto him, *i.e.* forasmuch as he has removed from his life the law which prohibits such things, the law shall requite him by removing him from that human life over which it presides.

Again, if He had said, "As much as ye shall have measured, so much shall be measured unto you," even from this statement it would not necessarily follow that we must understand punishments to be in every particular equal to the sins punished. Barley and wheat, for example, are not equal in quality, and yet it might be said, "As much as ye shall have measured, so much shall be measured unto you," meaning for so much wheat so much barley. Or if the matter in question were pain, it might be said, "As great pain shall be inflicted on you as you have inflicted on others;" this might mean that the pain should be in severity equal, but in time more protracted, and therefore by its continuance greater. For suppose I were to say of two lamps, "The flame of this one was as hot as the flame of the other," this would not be false, although, perchance, one of them was earlier extinguished than the other. Wherefore, if things be equally great in one respect, but not in another, the fact that they are not alike in

all respects does not invalidate the statement that in one respect, as admitted, they are equally great.

25. Seeing, however, that the words of Christ were these, "In what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you," and that beyond all question the measure in which anything is measured is one thing, and that which is measured in it is another, it is obviously possible that with the same measure with which men have measured, say, a bushel of wheat, there may be measured to them thousands of bushels, so that with no difference in the measure there may be all that difference in the quantity, not to speak of the difference of quality which might be in the things measured; for it is not only possible that with the same measure with which one has measured barley to others, wheat may be measured to him, but, moreover, with the same measure with which he has measured grain, gold may be measured to him, and of the grain there may have been one bushel, while there may be very many of the gold. Thus, although there is a difference both in kind and quantity, it may be nevertheless truly said in reference to things which are thus unlike: "In the measure in which he measured to others it is measured unto him."

The reason, moreover, why Christ uttered this saying is sufficiently plain from the immediately preceding context. "Judge not," He said, "that ye be not judged; for in the judgment in which ye judge ye shall be judged." Does this mean that if they have judged any one with injustice they shall themselves be unjustly judged? Of course not; for there is no unrighteousness with God. But it is thus expressed, "In the judgment in which ye judge ye shall be judged," as if it were said, In the will in which ye have dealt kindly with others ye shall be set at liberty, or in the will in which ye have done evil to others ye shall be punished. As if any one, for example, using his eyes for the gratification of base desires, were ordered to be made blind, this would be a just sentence for him to hear, "In those eyes by which thou hast sinned, in them hast thou deserved to be punished." For every one uses the judgment of his own mind, according as it is good or evil, for doing good or for doing evil. Wherefore it is not unjust that he be judged in that in which he judges,

that is to say, that he suffer the penalty in the mind's faculty of judgment when he is made to endure those evils which are the consequences of the sinful judgment of his mind.

26. For while other torments which are prepared to be hereafter inflicted are visible,—torments occasioned by the same central cause, namely, a depraved will,—it is also the fact that within the mind itself, in which the appetite of the will is the measure of all human actions, sin is followed immediately by punishment, which is for the most part increased in proportion to the greater blindness of one by whom it is not felt. Therefore when He had said, "With [or rather, as Augustine renders it, In] what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged," He went on to add, "And in what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you." A good man, that is to say, will measure out good actions in his own will, and in the same shall blessedness be measured unto him; and in like manner, a bad man will measure out bad actions in his own will, and in the same shall misery be meted out to him; for in whatsoever any one is good when his will aims at what is good, in the same he is evil when his will aims at what is evil. And therefore it is also in this that he is made to experience bliss or misery, viz. in the feeling experienced by his own will, which is the measure both of all actions and of the recompenses of actions. For we measure actions, whether good or bad, by the quality of the volitions which produce them, not by the length of time which they occupy. Were it otherwise, it would be regarded a greater crime to fell a tree than to kill a man. For the former takes a long time and many strokes, the latter may be done with one blow in a moment of time; and yet, if a man were punished with no more than transportation for life for this great crime committed in a moment, it would be said that he had been treated with more clemency than he deserved, although, in regard to the duration of time, the protracted punishment is not in any way to be compared with the sudden act of murder. Where, then, is anything contradictory in the sentence objected to, if the punishments shall be equally protracted or even alike eternal, but differing in comparative gentleness and severity? The duration is the same; the pain inflicted is different in

degree, because that which constitutes the measure of the sins themselves is found not in the length of time which they occupy, but in the will of those who commit them.

27. Certainly the will itself endures the punishment, whether pain be inflicted on the mind or on the body; so that the same thing which is gratified by the sin is smitten by the penalty, and so that he who judgeth without mercy is judged without mercy; for in this sentence also the standard of measure is the same only in this point, that what he did not give to others is denied to him, and therefore the judgment passed on him shall be eternal, although the judgment pronounced by him cannot be eternal. It is therefore in the sinner's own measure that punishments which are eternal are measured out to him, though the sins thus punished were not eternal; for as his wish was to have an eternal enjoyment of sin, so the award which he finds is an eternal endurance of suffering.

The brevity which I study in this reply precludes me from collecting all, or at least as many as I could, of the statements contained in our sacred books as to sin and the punishment of sin, and deducing from these one indisputable proposition on the subject; and perhaps, even if I obtained the necessary leisure, I might not possess abilities competent to the task. Nevertheless, I think that in the meantime I have proved that there is no contradiction between the eternity of punishment and the principle that sins shall be recompensed in the same measure in which men have committed them.

28. QUESTION V. The objector who has brought forward these questions from Porphyry has added this one in the next place: Will you have the goodness to instruct me as to whether Solomon said truly or not that God has no Son?

29. The answer is brief: Solomon not only did not say this, but, on the contrary, expressly said that God hath a Son. For in one of his writings Wisdom saith: "Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth."[1] And what is Christ but the Wisdom of God? Again, in another place in the book of Proverbs, he says: "God hath taught me wisdom, and I have learned the knowledge of the holy.[2] Who hath ascended up into heaven and descended?

[1] Prov. viii. 25: πρὸ δὲ πάντων βουνῶν γεννᾷ με, LXX. [2] According to LXX.

who hath gathered the winds in His fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His Son's name?"[1] Of the two questions concluding this quotation, the one referred to the Father, namely, "What is His name?"—with allusion to the foregoing words, "God hath taught me wisdom,"—the other evidently to the Son, since he says, "or what is His Son's name?"—with allusion to the other statements, which are more properly understood as pertaining to the Son, viz. "Who hath ascended up into heaven and descended?"—a question brought to remembrance by the words of Paul: "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens;"[2]—"Who hath gathered the winds in His fists?" *i.e.* the souls of believers in a hidden and secret place, to whom, accordingly, it is said, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God;"[3]—"Who hath bound the waters in a garment?"[4] whence it could be said, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ;"[5]—"Who hath established all the ends of the earth?" the same who said to His disciples, "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."[6]

30. QUESTION VI. The last question proposed is concerning Jonah, and it is put as if it were not from Porphyry, but as being a standing subject of ridicule among the Pagans; for his words are: "In the next place, what are we to believe concerning Jonah, who is said to have been three days in a whale's belly? The thing is utterly improbable and incredible, that a man swallowed with his clothes on should have existed in the inside of a fish. If, however, the story is figurative, be pleased to explain it. Again, what is meant by the story that a gourd sprang up above the head of Jonah after he was vomited by the fish? What was the cause of this gourd's growth?" Questions such as these I have seen discussed by Pagans amidst loud laughter, and with great scorn.

[1] Prov. xxx. 3, 4. [2] Eph. iv. 10. [3] Col. iii. 3.
[4] Augustine's words are: quis convertit aquam in vestimento? from the LXX.: *τίς συνέστρεψεν ὕδωρ ἐν ἱματίῳ.*
[5] Gal. iii. 27. [6] Acts i. 8.

31. To this I reply, that either all the miracles wrought by divine power may be treated as incredible, or there is no reason why the story of this miracle should not be believed. The resurrection of Christ Himself upon the third day would not be believed by us, if the Christian faith was afraid to encounter Pagan ridicule. Since, however, our friend did not on this ground ask whether it is to be believed that Lazarus was raised on the fourth day, or that Christ rose on the third day, I am much surprised that he reckoned what was done with Jonah to be incredible; unless, perchance, he thinks it easier for a dead man to be raised in life from his sepulchre, than for a living man to be kept in life in the spacious belly of a sea monster. For without mentioning the great size of sea monsters which is reported to us by those who have knowledge of them, let me ask how many men could be contained in the belly which was fenced round with those huge ribs which are fixed in a public place in Carthage, and are well known to all men there? Who can be at a loss to conjecture how wide an entrance must have been given by the opening of the mouth which was the gateway of that vast cavern? unless, perchance, as our friend stated it, the clothing of Jonah stood in the way of his being swallowed without injury, as if he had required to squeeze himself through a narrow passage, instead of being, as was the case, thrown headlong through the air, and so caught by the sea monster as to be received into its belly before he was wounded by its teeth. At the same time, the Scripture does not say whether he had his clothes on or not when he was cast down into that cavern, so that it may without contradiction be understood that he made that swift descent unclothed, if perchance it was necessary that his garment should be taken from him, as the shell is taken from an egg, to make him more easily swallowed. For men are as much concerned about the raiment of this prophet as would be reasonable if it were stated that he had crept through a very small window, or had been going into a bath; and yet, even though it were necessary in such circumstances to enter without parting with one's clothes, this would be only inconvenient, not miraculous.

32. But perhaps our objectors find it impossible to believe

in regard to this divine miracle that the heated moist air of the belly, whereby food is dissolved, could be so moderated in temperature as to preserve the life of a man. If so, with how much greater force might they pronounce it incredible that the three young men cast into the furnace by the impious king walked unharmed in the midst of the flames! If, therefore, these objectors refuse to believe *any* narrative of a divine miracle, they must be refuted by another line of argument. For it is incumbent on them in that case not to single out some one to be objected to, and called in question as incredible, but to denounce as incredible all narratives in which miracles of the same kind or more remarkable are recorded. And yet, if this which is written concerning Jonah were said to have been done by Apuleius of Madaura or Apollonius of Tyana, by whom they boast, though unsupported by reliable testimony, that many wonders were performed (albeit even the devils do some works like those done by the holy angels, not in truth, but in appearance, not by wisdom, but manifestly by subtlety), —if, I say, any such event were narrated in connection with these men to whom they give the flattering name of magicians or philosophers, we should hear from their mouths sounds not of derision, but of triumph. Be it so, then; let them laugh at our Scriptures; let them laugh as much as they can, when they see themselves daily becoming fewer in number, while some are removed by death, and others by their embracing the Christian faith, and when all those things are being fulfilled which were predicted by the prophets who long ago laughed at them, and said that they would fight and bark against the truth in vain, and would gradually come over to our side; and who not only transmitted these statements to us, their descendants, for our learning, but promised that they should be fulfilled in our experience.

33. It is neither unreasonable nor unprofitable to inquire what these miracles signify, so that, after their significance has been explained, men may believe not only that they really occurred, but also that they have been recorded, because of their possessing symbolical meaning. Let him, therefore, who proposes to inquire why the prophet Jonah was three days in the capacious belly of a sea monster, begin by dismissing

doubts as to the fact itself; for this did actually occur, and did not occur in vain. For if figures which are expressed in words only, and not in actions, aid our faith, how much more should our faith be helped by figures expressed not only in words, but also in actions! Now men are wont to speak by words; but divine power speaks by actions as well as by words. And as words which are new or somewhat unfamiliar lend brilliancy to a human discourse when they are scattered through it in a moderate and judicious manner, so the eloquence of divine revelation receives, so to speak, additional lustre from actions which are at once marvellous in themselves and skilfully designed to impart spiritual instruction.

34. As to the question, What was prefigured by the sea monster restoring alive on the third day the prophet whom it swallowed? why is this asked of us, when Christ Himself has given the answer, saying, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given it but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so must the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth"[1]? In regard to the three days in which the Lord Christ was under the power of death, it would take long to explain how they are reckoned to be three whole days, that is, days along with their nights, because of the whole of the first day and of the third day being understood as represented on the part of each; moreover, this has been already stated very often in other discourses. As, therefore, Jonah passed from the ship to the belly of the whale, so Christ passed from the cross to the sepulchre, or into the abyss of death. And as Jonah suffered this for the sake of those who were endangered by the storm, so Christ suffered for the sake of those who are tossed on the waves of this world. And as the command was given at first that the word of God should be preached to the Ninevites by Jonah, but the preaching of Jonah did not come to them until after the whale had vomited him forth, so prophetic teaching was addressed early to the Gentiles, but did not actually come to the Gentiles until after the resurrection of Christ from the grave.

[1] Matt. xii. 39, 40.

35. In the next place, as to Jonah's building for himself a booth, and sitting down over against Nineveh, waiting to see what would befall the city, the prophet was here in his own person the symbol of another fact. He prefigured the carnal people of Israel. For he also was grieved at the salvation of the Ninevites, that is, at the redemption and deliverance of the Gentiles, from among whom Christ came to call, not righteous men, but sinners to repentance.[1] Wherefore the shadow of that gourd over his head prefigured the promises of the Old Testament, or rather the privileges already enjoyed in it, in which there was, as the apostle says, "a shadow of things to come,"[2] furnishing, as it were, a refuge from the heat of temporal calamities in the land of promise. Moreover, in that morning-worm,[3] which by its gnawing tooth made the gourd wither away, Christ Himself is again prefigured, forasmuch as, by the publication of the gospel from His mouth, all those things which flourished among the Israelites for a time, or with a shadowy symbolical meaning in that earlier dispensation, are now deprived of their significance, and have withered away. And now that nation, having lost the kingdom, the priesthood, and the sacrifices formerly established in Jerusalem, all which privileges were a shadow of things to come, is burned with grievous heat of tribulation in its condition of dispersion and captivity, as Jonah was, according to the history, scorched with the heat of the sun, and is overwhelmed with sorrow; and notwithstanding, the salvation of the Gentiles and of the penitent is of more importance in the sight of God than this sorrow of Israel and the "shadow" of which the Jewish nation was so glad.

36. Again, let the Pagans laugh, and let them treat with proud and senseless ridicule Christ the Worm and this interpretation of the prophetic symbol, provided that He gradually and surely, nevertheless, consume them. For concerning all such Isaiah prophesies, when by him God says to us, "Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings: for the moth shall eat them up as a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool; but my

[1] Luke v. 32. [2] Col. ii. 17. [3] Vermis matutinus.

righteousness shall be for ever."[1] Let us therefore acknowledge Christ to be the morning-worm, because, moreover, in that psalm which bears the title, "Upon the hind of the morning,"[2] He has been pleased to call Himself by this very name: "I am," He says, "a worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people." This reproach is one of those reproaches which we are commanded not to fear in the words of Isaiah, "Fear ye not the reproach of men." By that Worm, as by a moth, they are being consumed who under the tooth of His gospel are made to wonder daily at the diminution of their numbers, which is caused by desertion from their party. Let us therefore acknowledge this symbol of Christ; and because of the salvation of God, let us bear patiently the reproaches of men. He is a Worm because of the lowliness of the flesh which He assumed—perhaps, also, because of His being born of a virgin; for the worm is generally not begotten, but spontaneously originated in flesh or any vegetable product [sine concubitu nascitur]. He is the *morning*-worm, because He rose from the grave before the dawn of day. That gourd might, of course, have withered without any worm at its root; and finally, if God regarded the worm as necessary for this work, what need was there to add the epithet *morning*-worm, if not to secure that He should be recognised as the Worm who in the psalm, "pro susceptione matutina," sings, "I am a worm, and no man"?

37. What, then, could be more palpable than the fulfilment of this prophecy in the accomplishment of the things foretold? That Worm was indeed despised when He hung upon the cross, as is written in the same psalm: "They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted in the Lord that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him;"[3] and again, when this was fulfilled which the psalm foretold, "They pierced my hands and my feet. They have told all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my ves-

[1] Isa. li. 7, 8.

[2] Ps. xxii. The title in the LXX. is, "ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀντιλήψεως τῆς ἑωθινῆς," which Augustine translates, "pro susceptione matutina."

[3] Ps. xxii. 7, 8.

ture,"[1]—circumstances which are in that ancient book described when future by the prophet with as great plainness as they are now recorded in the gospel history after their occurrence. But if in His humiliation that Worm was despised, is He to be still despised when we behold the accomplishment of those things which are predicted in the latter part of the same psalm: "All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship in His presence. For the kingdom is the Lord's; and He shall govern among the nations"?[2] Thus the Ninevites "remembered, and turned unto the Lord." The salvation granted to the Gentiles on their repentance, which was thus so long before prefigured, Israel then, as represented by Jonah, regarded with grief, as now their nation grieves, bereft of their shadow, and vexed with the heat of their tribulations. Any one is at liberty to open up with a different interpretation, if only it be in harmony with the rule of faith, all the other particulars which are hidden in the symbolical history of the prophet Jonah; but it is obvious that it is not lawful to interpret the three days which he passed in the belly of the whale otherwise than as it has been revealed by the heavenly Master Himself in the gospel, as quoted above.

38. I have answered to the best of my power the questions proposed; but let him who proposed them become now a Christian at once, lest, if he delay until he has finished the discussion of all difficulties connected with the sacred books, he come to the end of this life before he pass from death to life. For it is reasonable that he inquire as to the resurrection of the dead before he is admitted to the Christian sacraments. Perhaps he ought also to be allowed to insist on preliminary discussion of the question proposed concerning Christ—why He came so late in the world's history, and of a few great questions besides, to which all others are subordinate. But to think of finishing all such questions as those concerning the words, "In what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you," and concerning Jonah, before he becomes a Christian, is to betray great unmindfulness of man's limited capacities, and of the shortness of the life which

[1] Ps. xxii. 16–18. [2] Ps. xxii. 27, 28.

remains to him. For there are innumerable questions the solution of which is not to be demanded before we believe, lest life be finished by us in unbelief. When, however, the Christian faith has been thoroughly received, these questions behove to be studied with the utmost diligence for the pious satisfaction of the minds of believers. Whatever is discovered by such study ought to be imparted to others without vain self-complacency; if anything still remain hidden, we must bear with patience an imperfection of knowledge which is not prejudicial to salvation.

LETTER CIII.

(A.D. 409.)

TO MY LORD AND BROTHER, AUGUSTINE, RIGHTLY AND JUSTLY WORTHY OF ESTEEM AND OF ALL POSSIBLE HONOUR, NECTARIUS SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. In reading the letter of your Excellency, in which you have overthrown the worship of idols and the ritual of their temples,[1] I seemed to myself to hear the voice of a philosopher,—not of such a philosopher as the academician of whom they say, that having neither new doctrine to propound nor earlier statements of his own to defend, he was wont to sit in gloomy corners on the ground absorbed in some deep reverie, with his knees drawn back to his forehead, and his head buried between them, contriving how he might as a detractor assail the discoveries or cavil at the statements by which others had earned renown; nay, the form which rose under the spell of your eloquence and stood before my eyes was rather that of the great statesman Cicero, who, having been crowned with laurels for saving the lives of many of his countrymen, carried the trophies won in his forensic victories into the wondering schools of Greek philosophy, when, as one pausing for breath, he laid down the trumpet of sonorous voice and language which he had blown with the blast of just indignation against those who had broken the laws and conspired against the life of the republic, and, adopting the

[1] Letter XCI. vol. i. p. 382.

fashion of the Grecian mantle, unfastened and threw back over his shoulders the toga's ample folds.

2. I therefore listened with pleasure when you urged us to the worship and religion of the only supreme God; and when you counselled us to look to our heavenly fatherland, I received the exhortation with joy. For you were obviously speaking to me not of any city confined by encircling ramparts, nor of that commonwealth on this earth which the writings of philosophers have mentioned and declared to have all mankind as its citizens, but of that City which is inhabited and possessed by the great God, and by the spirits which have earned this recompense from Him, to which, by diverse roads and pathways, all religions aspire,—the City which we are not able in language to describe, but which perhaps we might by thinking apprehend. But while this City ought therefore to be, above all others, desired and loved, I am nevertheless of opinion that we are bound not to prove unfaithful to our own native land,—the land which first imparted to us the enjoyment of the light of day, in which we were nursed and educated, and (to pass to what is specially relevant in this case) the land by rendering services to which men obtain a home prepared for them in heaven after the death of the body; for, in the opinion of the most learned, promotion to that celestial City is granted to those men who have deserved well of the cities which gave them birth, and a higher experience of fellowship with God is the portion of those who are proved to have contributed by their counsels or by their labours to the welfare of their native land.

As to the remark which you were pleased wittily to make regarding our town, that it has been made conspicuous not so much by the achievements of warriors as by the conflagrations of incendiaries, and that it has produced thorns rather than flowers, this is not the severest reproof that might have been given, for we know that flowers are for the most part borne on thorny bushes. For who does not know that even roses grow on briars, and that in the bearded heads of grain the ears are guarded by spikes, and that, in general, pleasant and painful things are found blended together?

3. The last statement in your Excellency's letter was, that

neither capital punishment nor bloodshed is demanded in order to compensate for the wrong done to the Church, but that the offenders must be deprived of the possessions which they most fear to lose. But in my deliberate judgment, though, of course, I may be mistaken, it is a more grievous thing to be deprived of one's property than to be deprived of life. For, as you know, it is an observation frequently recurring in the whole range of literature, that death terminates the experience of all evils, but that a life of indigence only confers upon us an eternity of wretchedness; for it is worse to live miserably than to put an end to our miseries by death. This fact, also, is declared by the whole nature and method of your work, in which you support the poor, minister healing to the diseased, and apply remedies to the bodies of those who are in pain, and, in short, make it your business to prevent the afflicted from feeling the protracted continuance of their sufferings.

Again, as to the degree of demerit in the faults of some as compared with others, it is of no importance what the quality of the fault may seem to be in a case in which forgiveness is craved. For, in the first place, if penitence procures forgiveness and expiates the crime—and surely he is penitent who begs pardon and humbly embraces the feet of the party whom he has offended—and if, moreover, as is the opinion of some philosophers, all faults are alike, pardon ought to be bestowed upon all without distinction. One of our citizens may have spoken somewhat rudely: this was a fault; another may have perpetrated an insult or an injury: this was equally a fault; another may have violently taken what was not his own: this is reckoned a crime; another may have attacked buildings devoted to secular or to sacred purposes: he ought not to be for this crime placed beyond the reach of pardon. Finally, there would be no occasion for pardon if there were no foregoing faults.

4. Having now replied to your letter, not as the letter deserved, but to the best of my ability, such as it is, I beg and implore you (oh that I were in your presence, that you might also see my tears!) to consider again and again who you are, what is your professed character, and what is the business

to which your life is devoted. Reflect upon the appearance presented by a town from which men doomed to torture are dragged forth; think of the lamentations of mothers and wives, of sons and of fathers; think of the shame felt by those who may return, set at liberty indeed, but having undergone the torture; think what sorrow and groaning the sight of their wounds and scars must renew. And when you have pondered all these things, first think of God, and think of your good name among men; or rather think of what friendly charity and the bonds of common humanity require at your hands, and seek to be praised not by punishing but by pardoning the offenders. And such things may indeed be said regarding your treatment of those whom actual guilt condemns on their own confession: to these persons you have, out of regard to your religion, granted pardon; and for this I shall always praise you. But now it is scarcely possible to express the greatness of that cruelty which pursues the innocent, and summons those to stand trial on a capital charge of whom it is certain that they had no share in the crimes alleged. If it so happen that they are acquitted, consider, I beseech you, with what ill-will their acquittal must be regarded by their accusers, who of their own accord dismissed the guilty from the bar, but let the innocent go only when they were defeated in their attempts against them.

May the supreme God be your keeper, and preserve you as a bulwark of His religion and an ornament to our country.

LETTER CIV.

(A.D. 409.)

TO NECTARIUS, MY NOBLE LORD AND BROTHER, JUSTLY WORTHY OF ALL HONOUR AND ESTEEM, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

CHAP. I. 1. I have read the letter which you kindly sent in answer to mine. Your reply comes at a very long interval after the time when I despatched my letter to you. For I had written an answer to you [1] when my holy brother and

[1] Letter XCI. vol. i. p. 381.

colleague Possidius was still with us, before he had entered on his voyage; but the letter which you have been pleased to entrust to him for me I received on March 27th, about eight months after I had written to you. The reason why my communication was so late in reaching you, or yours so late in being sent to me, I do not know. Perhaps your prudence has only now dictated the reply which your pride formerly disdained. If this be the explanation, I wonder what has occasioned the change. Have you perchance heard some report, which is as yet unknown to us, that my brother Possidius had obtained authority for proceedings of greater severity against your citizens, whom—you must excuse me for saying this—he loves in a way more likely to promote their welfare than you do yourself? For your letter shows that you apprehended something of this kind when you charge me to set before my eyes "the appearance presented by a town from which men doomed to torture are dragged forth," and to "think of the lamentations of mothers and wives, of sons and of fathers; of the shame felt by those who may return, set at liberty indeed, but having undergone the torture; and of the sorrow and groaning which the sight of their wounds and scars must renew."[1] Far be it from us to demand the infliction, either by ourselves or by any one, of such hardships upon any of our enemies! But, as I have said, if report has brought any such measures of severity to your ears, give us a more clear and particular account of the things reported, that we may know either what to do in order to prevent these things from being done, or what answer we must make in order to disabuse the minds of those who believe the rumour.

2. Examine more carefully my letter, to which you have so reluctantly sent a reply, for I have in it made my views sufficiently plain; but through not remembering, as I suppose, what I had written, you have in your reply made reference to sentiments widely differing from mine, and wholly unlike them. For, as if quoting from memory what I had written, you have inserted in your letter what I never said at all in mine. You say that the concluding sentence of my letter was, "that neither capital punishment nor bloodshed is demanded in order to

[1] Letter CIII. p. 63.

compensate for the wrong done to the Church, but that the offenders must be deprived of that which they most fear to lose;" and then, in showing how great a calamity this imports, you add and connect with my words that you "deliberately judge—though you may perhaps be mistaken—that it is a more grievous thing to be deprived of one's possessions than to be deprived of life." And in order to expound more clearly the kind of possessions to which you refer, you go on to say that it must be known to me, "as an observation frequently recurring in the whole range of literature, that death terminates the experience of all evils, but that a life of indigence only confers upon us an eternity of wretchedness." From which you have drawn the conclusion that it is "worse to live miserably than to put an end to our miseries by death."

3. Now I for my part do not recollect reading anywhere —either in our [Christian] literature, to which I confess that I was later of applying my mind than I could now wish that I had been, or in your [Pagan] literature, which I studied from my childhood—that "a life of indigence only confers upon us an eternity of wretchedness." For the poverty of the industrious is never in itself a crime; nay, it is to some extent a means of withdrawing and restraining men from sin. And therefore the circumstance that a man has lived in poverty here is no ground for apprehending that this shall procure for him after this brief life "an eternity of wretchedness;" and in this life which we spend on earth it is utterly impossible for any misery to be eternal, seeing that this life cannot be eternal, nay, is not of long duration even in those who attain to the most advanced old age. In the writings referred to, I for my part have read, not that in this life—as you think, and as you allege that these writings frequently affirm—there can be an eternity of wretchedness, but rather that this life itself which we here enjoy is short. Some, indeed, but not all, of your authors have said that death is the end of all evils: that is indeed the opinion of the Epicureans, and of such others as believe the soul to be mortal. But those philosophers whom Cicero designates "consulares" in a certain sense, because he attaches great weight to their authority, are of

opinion that when our last hour on earth comes the soul is not annihilated, but removes from its tenement, and continues in existence for a state of blessedness or of misery, according to that which a man's actions, whether good or bad, claim as their due recompense. This agrees with the teaching of our sacred writings, with which I wish that I were more fully conversant. Death is therefore the end of all evils—but only in the case of those whose life is pure, religious, upright, and blameless; not in the case of those who, inflamed with passionate desire for the trifles and vanities of time, are proved to be miserable by the utter perversion of their desires, though meanwhile they esteem themselves happy, and are after death compelled not only to accept as their lot, but to realize in their experience far greater miseries.

4. These sentiments, therefore, being frequently expressed both in some of your own authors, whom you deem worthy of greater esteem, and in all our Scriptures, be it yours, O worthy lover of the country which is on earth your father-land, to dread on behalf of your countrymen a life of luxurious indulgence rather than a life of indigence; or if you fear a life of indigence, warn them that the poverty which is to be more studiously shunned is that of the man who, though surrounded with abundance of worldly possessions, is, through the insatiable eagerness wherewith he covets these, kept always in a state of want, which, to use the words of your own authors, neither plenty nor scarcity can relieve. In the letter, however, to which you reply, I did not say that those of your citizens who are enemies to the Church were to be corrected by being reduced to that extremity of indigence in which the necessaries of life are wanting, and to which succour is brought by that compassion of which you have thought it incumbent on you to point out to me that it is professed by us in the whole plan of those labours wherein we "support the poor, minister healing to the diseased, and apply remedies to the bodies of those who are in pain;" albeit, even such extremity of want as this would be more profitable than abundance of all things, if abused to the gratification of evil passions. But far be it from me to think that those about whom we are treating should be

reduced to such destitution by the measures of coercion proposed.

Chap. II. 5. Though you did not consider it worth while to read my letter over when it was to be answered, perhaps you have at least so far esteemed it as to preserve it, in order to its being brought to you when you at any time might desire it and call for it; if this be the case, look over it again, and mark carefully my words: you will assuredly find in it one thing to which, in my opinion, you must admit that you have made no reply. For in that letter occur the words which I now quote: "We do not desire to gratify our anger by vindictive retribution for the past, but we are concerned to make provision in a truly merciful spirit for the future. Now wicked men have something in respect to which they may be punished, and that by Christians, in a merciful way, and so as to promote their own profit and well-being. For they have these three things—life and health of the body, the means of supporting that life, and the means and opportunities of living a wicked life. Let the two former remain untouched in the possession of those who repent of their crime; this we desire, and this we spare no pains to secure. But as to the third, if it please God to deal with it as a decaying or diseased part, which must be removed with the pruning-knife, He will in such punishment prove the greatness of His compassion."[1] If you had read over these words of mine again, when you were pleased to write your reply, you would have looked upon it rather as an unkind insinuation than as a necessary duty to address to me a petition not only for deliverance from death, but also for exemption from torture, on behalf of those regarding whom I said that we wished to leave unimpaired their possession of bodily life and health. Neither was there any ground for your apprehending our inflicting a life of indigence and of dependence upon others for daily bread on those regarding whom I had said that we desired to secure to them the second of the possessions named above, viz. the means of supporting life. But as to their third possession, viz. the means and opportunities of living wickedly, that is to say—passing over other things—their silver with which

[1] Letter XCI. 9, vol. i. p. 389.

they constructed those images of their false gods, in whose protection or adoration or unhallowed worship an attempt was made even to destroy the church of God by fire, and the provision made for relieving the poverty of very pious persons was given up to become the spoil of a wretched mob, and blood was freely shed—why, I ask, does your patriotic heart dread the stroke which shall cut this away, in order to prevent a fatal boldness from being in everything fostered and confirmed by impunity? This I beg you to discuss fully, and to show me in well-considered arguments what wrong there is in this; mark carefully what I say, lest under the form of a petition in regard to what I am saying you appear to bring against us an indirect accusation.

6. Let your countrymen be well reported of for their virtuous manners, not for their superfluous wealth; we do not wish them to be reduced through coercive measures on our account to the plough of Quintius [Cincinnatus], or to the hearth of Fabricius. Yet by such extreme poverty these statesmen of the Roman republic not only did not incur the contempt of their fellow-citizens, but were on that very account peculiarly dear to them, and esteemed the more qualified to administer the resources of their country. We neither desire nor endeavour to reduce the estates of your rich men, so that in their possession should remain no more than ten pounds of silver, as was the case with Ruffinus, who twice held the consulship, which amount the stern censorship of that time laudably required to be still further reduced as culpably large. So much are we influenced by the prevailing sentiments of a degenerate age in dealing more tenderly with minds that are very feeble, that to Christian clemency the measure which seemed just to the censors of that time appears unduly severe; yet you see how great is the difference between the two cases, the question being in the one, whether the mere fact of possessing ten pounds of silver should be dealt with as a punishable crime, and in the other, whether any one, after committing other very great crimes, should be permitted to retain the sum aforesaid in his possession; we only ask that what in those days was itself a crime be in our days made the punishment of crime. There is, however, one

thing which can be done, and ought to be done, in order that, on the one hand, severity may not be pushed even so far as I have mentioned, and that, on the other, men may not, presuming on impunity, run into excess of exultation and rioting, and thus furnish to other unhappy men an example by following which they would become liable to the severest and most unheard of punishments. Let this at least be granted by you, that those who attempt with fire and sword to destroy what are necessaries to us be made afraid of losing those luxuries of which they have a pernicious abundance. Permit us also to confer upon our enemies this benefit, that we prevent them, by their fears about that which it would do them no harm to forfeit, from attempting to do that which would bring harm to themselves. For this is to be termed prudent prevention, not punishment of crime; this is not to impose penalties, but to protect men from becoming liable to penalties.

7. When any one uses measures involving the infliction of some pain, in order to prevent an inconsiderate person from incurring the most dreadful punishments by becoming accustomed to crimes which yield him no advantage, he is like one who pulls a boy's hair in order to prevent him from provoking serpents by clapping his hands at them; in both cases, while the acting of love is vexatious to its object, no member of the body is injured, whereas safety and life are endangered by that from which the person is deterred. We confer a benefit upon others, not in every case in which we do what is requested, but when we do that which is not hurtful to our petitioners. For in most cases we serve others best by not giving, and would injure them by giving, what they desire. Hence the proverb, "Do not put a sword in a child's hand." "Nay," says Cicero, "refuse it even to your only son. For the more we love any one, the more are we bound to avoid entrusting to him things which are the occasion of very dangerous faults." He was referring to riches, if I am not mistaken, when he made these observations. Wherefore it is for the most part an advantage to themselves when certain things are removed from persons in whose keeping it is hazardous to leave them, lest they abuse them. When

surgeons see that a gangrene must be cut away or cauterized, they often, out of compassion, turn a deaf ear to many cries. If we had been indulgently forgiven by our parents and teachers in our tender years on every occasion on which, being found in a fault, we begged to be let off, which of us would not have grown up intolerable? which of us would have learned any useful thing? Such punishments are administered by wise care, not by wanton cruelty. Do not, I beseech you, in this matter think only how to accomplish that which you are requested by your countrymen to do, but carefully consider the matter in all its bearings. If you overlook the past, which cannot now be undone, consider the future; wisely give heed, not to the desire, but to the real interests of the petitioners who have applied to you. We are convicted of unfaithfulness towards those whom we profess to love, if our only care is lest, by refusing to do what they ask of us, their love towards us be diminished. And what becomes of that virtue which even your own literature commends, in the ruler of his country who studies not so much the wishes as the welfare of his people?

CHAP. III. 8. You say "it is of no importance what the quality of the fault may be in any case in which forgiveness is craved." In this you would state the truth if the matter in question were the punishment and not the correction of men. Far be it from a Christian heart to be carried away by the lust of revenge to inflict punishment on any one. Far be it from a Christian, when forgiving any one his fault, to do otherwise than either anticipate or at least promptly answer the petition of him who asks forgiveness; but let his purpose in doing this be, that he may overcome the temptation to hate the man who has offended him, and to render evil for evil, and to be inflamed with rage prompting him, if not to do an injury, at least to desire to see the infliction of the penalties appointed by law; let it not be that he may relieve himself from considering the offender's interest, exercising foresight on his behalf, and restraining him from evil actions. For it is possible, on the one hand, that, moved by more vehement hostility, one may neglect the correction of a man whom he hates bitterly, and, on the other hand, that by correction

involving the infliction of some pain one may secure the improvement of another whom he dearly loves.

9. I grant that, as you write, "penitence procures forgiveness, and blots out the offence," but it is that penitence which is practised under the influence of the true religion, and which has regard to the future judgment of God; not that penitence which is for the time professed or pretended before men, not to secure the cleansing of the soul for ever from the fault, but only to deliver from present apprehension of pain the life which is so soon to perish. This is the reason why in the case of some Christians who confessed their fault, and asked forgiveness for having been involved in the guilt of that crime,—either by their not protecting the church when in danger of being burned, or by their appropriating a portion of the property which the miscreants carried off,—we believed that the pain of repentance had borne fruit, and considered it sufficient for their correction, because in their hearts is found that faith by which they could realize what they ought to fear from the judgment of God for their sin. But how can there be any healing virtue in the repentance of those who not only fail to acknowledge, but even persist in mocking and blaspheming Him who is the fountain of forgiveness? At the same time, towards these men we do not cherish any feeling of enmity in our hearts, which are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him whose judgment both in this life and in the life to come we dread, and in whose help we place our hope. But we think that we are even taking measures for the benefit of these men, if, seeing that they do not fear God, we inspire fear in them by doing something whereby their folly is chastened, while their real interests suffer no wrong. We thus prevent that God whom they despise from being more grievously provoked by their greater crimes, to which they would be emboldened by a disastrous assurance of impunity, and we prevent their assurance of impunity from being set forth with even more mischievous effect as an encouragement to others to imitate their example. In fine, on behalf of those for whom you make intercession to us, we intercede before God, beseeching Him to turn them to Himself, and to teach them the exercise of

genuine and salutary repentance, purifying their hearts by faith.

10. Behold, then, how we love those men against whom you suppose us to be full of anger,—loving them, you must permit me to say, with a love more prudent and profitable than you yourself cherish towards them; for we plead on their behalf that they may escape much greater afflictions, and obtain much greater blessings. If you also loved these men, not in the mere earthly affections of men, but with that love which is the heavenly gift of God, and if you were sincere in writing to me that you gave ear with pleasure to me when I was recommending to you the worship and religion of the Supreme God, you would not only wish for your countrymen the blessings which we seek on their behalf, but you would yourself by your example lead them to their possession. Thus would the whole business of your interceding with us be concluded with abundant and most reasonable joy. Thus would your title to that heavenly fatherland, in regard to which you say that you welcomed my counsel that you should fix your eye upon it, be earned by a true and pious exercise of your love for the country which gave you birth, when seeking to make sure to your fellow-citizens, not the vain dream of temporal happiness, nor a most perilous exemption from the due punishment of their faults, but the gracious gift of eternal blessedness.

11. You have here a frank avowal of the thoughts and desires of my heart in this matter. As to what lies concealed in the counsels of God, I confess it is unknown to me; I am but a man; but whatever it be, His counsel stands most sure, and incomparably excels in equity and in wisdom all that can be conceived by the minds of men. With truth is it said in our books, "There are many devices in a man's heart; but the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand."[1] Wherefore, as to what time may bring forth, as to what may arise to simplify or complicate our procedure, in short, as to what desire may suddenly be awakened by the fear of losing or the hope of retaining present possessions; whether God shall show Himself so displeased by what they have done that they shall

[1] Prov xix. 21.

be punished with the more weighty and severe sentence of a disastrous impunity, or shall appoint that they shall be compassionately corrected in the manner which we propose, or shall avert whatever terrible doom was being prepared for them, and convert it into joy by some more stern but more salutary correction, leading to their turning unfeignedly to seek mercy not from men but from Himself,—all this He knoweth; we know not. Why, then, should your Excellency and I be spending toil in vain over this matter before the time? Let us for a little while lay aside a care the hour of which has not yet come, and, if you please, let us occupy ourselves with that which is always pressing. For there is no time at which it is not both suitable and necessary for us to consider in what way we can please God; because for a man to attain completely in this life to such perfection that no sin whatever shall remain in him is either impossible or (if perchance any attain to it) extremely difficult: wherefore without delay we ought to flee at once to the grace of Him to whom we may address with perfect truth the words which were addressed to some illustrious man by a poet, who declared that he had borrowed the lines from a Cumæan oracle, or ode of prophetic inspiration: "With thee as our leader, the obliteration of all remaining traces of our sin shall deliver the earth from perpetual alarm."[1] For with Him as our leader, all sins are blotted out and forgiven; and by His way we are brought to that heavenly fatherland, the thought of which as a dwelling-place pleased you greatly when I was to the utmost of my power commending it to your affection and desire.

CHAP. IV. 12. But since you said that all religions by diverse roads and pathways aspire to that one dwelling-place, I fear lest, perchance, while supposing that the way in which you are now found tends thither, you should be somewhat reluctant to embrace the way which alone leads men to heaven. Observing, however, more carefully the word which you used, I think that it is not presumptuous for me to expound its meaning somewhat differently; for you did not say that all religions by diverse roads and pathways reach heaven, or reveal, or find, or enter, or secure that blessed

[1] Virgil, *Ecl.* iv. 5.

land, but by saying in a phrase deliberately weighed and chosen that all religions aspire to it, you have indicated, not the fruition, but the desire of heaven as common to all religions. You have in these words neither shut out the one religion which is true, nor admitted other religions which are false; for certainly the way which brings us to the goal aspires thitherward, but not every way which aspires thitherward brings us to the place wherein all who are brought thither are unquestionably blest. Now we all wish, that is, we aspire, to be blest; but we cannot all achieve what we wish, that is, we do not all obtain what we aspire to. That man, therefore, obtains heaven who walks in the way which not only aspires thitherward, but actually brings him thither, separating himself from others who keep to the ways which aspire heavenward without finally reaching heaven. For there would be no wandering if men were content to aspire to nothing, or if the truth which men aspire to were obtained. If, however, in using the expression "diverse ways," you meant me not to understand contrary ways, but different ways, in the sense in which we speak of diverse precepts, which all tend to build up a holy life,—one enjoining chastity, another patience or faith or mercy, and the like,—in roads and pathways which are only in this sense diverse, that country is not only aspired unto but actually found. For in Holy Scripture we read both of ways and of a way,—of ways, *e.g.* in the words, "I will teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee;"[1] of a way, *e.g.* in the prayer, "Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in Thy truth."[2] Those ways and this way are not different; but in one way are comprehended all those of which in another place the Holy Scripture saith, "All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth."[3] The careful study of these ways furnishes theme for a long discourse, and for most delightful meditation; but this I shall defer to another time if it be required.

13. In the meantime, however,—and this, I think, may suffice in the present reply to your Excellency,—seeing that Christ has said, "I am the way,"[4] it is in Him that mercy and truth are to be sought: if we seek these in any other way, we

[1] Ps. li. 13. [2] Ps. lxxxvi. 11. [3] Ps. xxv. 10. [4] John xiv. 6.

must go astray, following a path which aspires to the true goal, but does not lead men thither. For example, if we resolved to follow the way indicated in the maxim which you mentioned, "All sins are alike,"[1] would it not lead us into hopeless exile from that fatherland of truth and blessedness? For could anything more absurd and senseless be said, than that the man who has laughed too rudely, and the man who has furiously set his city on fire, should be judged as having committed equal crimes? This opinion, which is not one of many diverse ways leading to the heavenly dwelling-place, but a perverse way leading inevitably to most fatal error, you have judged it necessary to quote from certain philosophers, not because you concurred in the sentiment, but because it might help your plea for your fellow-citizens—that we might forgive those whose rage set our church in flames on the same terms as we would forgive those who may have assailed us with some insolent reproach.

14. But reconsider with me the reasoning by which you supported your position. You say, "If, as is the opinion of some philosophers, all faults are alike, pardon ought to be bestowed upon all without distinction." Thereafter, labouring apparently to prove that all faults are alike, you go on to say, "One of our citizens may have spoken somewhat rudely: this was a fault; another may have perpetrated an insult or an injury: this was equally a fault." This is not teaching truth, but advancing, without any evidence in its support, a perversion of truth. For to your statement, "this was equally a fault," we at once give direct contradiction. You demand, perhaps, proof; but I reply, What proof have you given of your statement? Are we to hear as evidence your next sentence, "Another may have violently taken away what was not his own: this is reckoned a misdemeanour"? Here you own yourself to be ashamed of the maxim which you quoted; you had not the assurance to say that this was equally a fault, but you say "it is reckoned a misdemeanour." But the question here is not whether this also is reckoned a misdemeanour, but whether this offence and the others which you mentioned are faults equal in demerit, unless, of course, they are to be

[1] Letter CIII. § 3, p. 62.

pronounced equal because they are both offences; in which case the mouse and the elephant must be pronounced equal because they are both animals, and the fly and the eagle because they both have wings.

15. You go still further, and make this proposition: "Another may have attacked buildings devoted to secular or to sacred purposes: he ought not for this crime to be placed beyond the reach of pardon." In this sentence you have indeed come to the most flagrant crime of your fellow-citizens, in speaking of injury done to sacred buildings; but even you have not affirmed that this is a crime equal only to the utterance of an insolent word. You have contented yourself with asking, on behalf of those who were guilty of this, that forgiveness which is rightly asked from Christians on the ground of their overflowing compassion, not on the ground of an alleged equality of all offences. I have already quoted a sentence of Scripture, "All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth." They shall therefore find mercy if they do not hate truth. This mercy is granted, not as if it were due on the ground of the faults of all being only equal to the fault of those who have uttered rude words, but because the law of Christ claims pardon for those who are penitent, however inhuman and impious their crime may have been. I beg you, esteemed sir, not to propound these paradoxes of the Stoics as rules of conduct for your son Paradoxus, whom we wish to see grow up in piety and in prosperity, to your satisfaction. For what could be worse for himself, yea, what more dangerous for yourself, than that your ingenuous boy should imbibe an error which would make the guilt, I shall not say of parricide, but of insolence to his father, equal only to that of some rude word inconsiderately spoken to a stranger?

16. You are wise, therefore, to insist, when pleading with us for your countrymen on the compassion of Christians, not on the stern doctrines of the Stoical philosophy, which in no wise help, but much rather hinder, the cause which you have undertaken to support. For a merciful disposition, which we must have if it be possible for us to be moved either by your intercession or by their entreaties, is pronounced by the Stoics to be an unworthy weakness, and they expel it utterly from

the mind of the wise man, whose perfection, in their opinion, is to be as impassive and inflexible as iron. With more reason, therefore, might it have occurred to you to quote from your own Cicero that sentence in which, praising Cæsar, he says, "Of all your virtues, none is more worthy of admiration, none more graceful, than your clemency."[1] How much more ought this merciful disposition to prevail in the churches which follow Him who said, "I am the way," and which learn from His word, "All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth"! Fear not, then, that we will try to bring innocent persons to death, when in truth we do not even wish the guilty to experience the punishment which they deserve, being moved by that mercy which, joined with truth, we love in Christ. But the man who, from fear of painfully crossing the will of the guilty, spares and indulges vices which must thereby gather more strength, is less merciful than the man who, lest he should hear his little boy crying, will not take from him a dangerous knife, and is unmoved by fear of the wounds or death which he may have to bewail as the consequence of his weakness. Reserve, therefore, until the proper time the work of interceding with us for those men, in loving whom (excuse my saying so) you not only do not go beyond us, but are even hitherto refusing to follow our steps; and write rather in your reply what influences you to shun the way which we follow, and in which we beseech you to go along with us towards that fatherland above, in which we rejoice to know that you take great delight.

17. As to those who are by birth your fellow-citizens, you have said indeed that some of them, though not all, were innocent; but, as you must see if you read over again my other letter, you have not made out a defence for them. When, in answer to your remark that you wished to leave your country flourishing, I said that we had felt thorns rather than found flowers in your countrymen, you thought that I wrote in jest. As if, forsooth, in the midst of evils of such magnitude we were in a mood for mirth. Certainly not. While the smoke was ascending from the ruins of our church consumed by fire, were we likely to joke on the subject?

[1] Oratio pro Q. Ligario.

Although, indeed, none in your city appeared in my opinion innocent, but those who were absent, or were sufferers, or were destitute both of strength and of authority to prevent the tumult, I nevertheless distinguished in my reply those whose guilt was greater from those who were less to blame, and stated that there was a difference between the cases of those who were moved by fear of offending powerful enemies of the Church, and of those who desired these outrages to be committed; also between those who committed them and those who instigated others to their commission; resolving, however, not to institute inquiry in regard to the instigators, because these, perhaps, could not be ascertained without recourse to the use of tortures, from which we shrink with abhorrence, as utterly inconsistent with our aims. Your friends the Stoics, who hold that all faults are alike, must, however, if they were the judges, pronounce them all equally guilty; and if to this opinion they join that inflexible sternness wherewith they disparage clemency as a vice, their sentence would necessarily be, not that all should be pardoned alike, but that all should be punished alike. Dismiss, therefore, these philosophers altogether from the position of advocates in this case, and rather desire that we may act as Christians, so that, as we desire, we may gain in Christ those whom we forgive, and may not spare them by such indulgence as would be ruinous to themselves. May God, whose ways are mercy and truth, be pleased to enrich you with true felicity!

LETTER CXI.

(NOVEMBER, A.D. 409.)

TO VICTORIANUS, HIS BELOVED LORD AND MOST LONGED-FOR BROTHER AND FELLOW-PRESBYTER, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. MY heart has been filled with great sorrow by your letter. You asked me to discuss certain things at great length in my reply; but such calamities as you narrate claim rather many groans and tears than prolix treatises. The whole world, indeed, is afflicted with such portentous misfortunes, that there is

scarcely any place where such things as you describe are not being committed and complained of. A short time ago some brethren were massacred by the barbarians even in those deserts of Egypt in which, in order to perfect security, they had chosen places remote from all disturbance as the sites of their monasteries. I suppose, moreover, that the outrages which they have perpetrated in the regions of Italy and Gaul are known to you also; and now similar events begin to be announced to us from many provinces of Spain, which for long seemed exempt from these evils. But why go to a distance for examples? Behold! in our own county of Hippo, which the barbarians have not yet touched, the ravages of the Donatist clergy and Circumcelliones make such havoc in our churches, that perhaps the cruelties of barbarians would be light in comparison. For what barbarian could ever have devised what these have done, viz. casting lime and vinegar into the eyes of our clergymen, besides atrociously beating and wounding every part of their bodies? They also sometimes plunder and burn houses, rob granaries, and pour out oil and wine; and by threatening to do this to all others in the district, they compel many even to be re-baptized. Only yesterday, tidings came to me of forty-eight souls in one place having submitted, under fear of such things, to be re-baptized.

2. These things should make us weep, but not wonder; and we ought to cry unto God that not for our merit, but acccording to His mercy, He may deliver us from so great evils. For what else was to be expected by the human race, seeing that these things were so long ago foretold both by the prophets and in the Gospels? We ought not, therefore, to be so inconsistent as to believe these Scriptures when they are read by us, and to complain when they are fulfilled; rather, surely, ought even those who had refused to believe when they read or heard these things in Scripture to become believers now when they behold the word fulfilled; so that under this great pressure, as it were, in the olive-press of the Lord our God, although there be the dregs of unbelieving murmurs and blasphemies, there is also a steady outflowing of pure oil in the confessions and prayers of believers. For unto those men who incessantly reproach the Christian faith, impiously saying

that the human race did not suffer such grievous calamities before the Christian doctrine was promulgated throughout the world, it is easy to find a reply in the Lord's own words in the gospel, "That servant which knew not his lord's will, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes; but the servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes."[1] What is there to excite surprise, if, in the Christian dispensation, the world, like that servant, knowing the will of the Lord, and refusing to do it, is beaten with many stripes? These men remark the rapidity with which the gospel is proclaimed: they do not remark the perversity with which by many it is despised. But the meek and pious servants of God, who have to bear a double portion of temporal calamities, since they suffer both at the hands of wicked men and along with them, have also consolations peculiarly their own, and the hope of the world to come; for which reason the apostle says, "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall hereafter be revealed in us."[2]

3. Wherefore, my beloved, even when you meet those whose words you say you cannot bear, because they say, "If we have deserved these things for our sins, how comes it that the servants of God are cut off not less than ourselves by the sword of the barbarians, and the handmaids of God are led away into captivity?"—answer them humbly, truly, and piously in such words as these: However carefully we keep the way of righteousness, and yield obedience to our Lord, can we be better than those three men who were cast into the fiery furnace for keeping the law of God? And yet, read what Azarias, one of those three, said, opening his lips in the midst of the fire: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers: Thy name is worthy to be praised and glorified for evermore; for Thou art righteous in all the things that Thou hast done to us; yea, true are all Thy works: Thy ways are right, and all Thy judgments truth. In all the things which Thou hast brought upon us, and upon the holy city of our fathers, even Jerusalem, Thou hast executed true judgment; for according to

[1] Luke xii. 47, 48. [2] Rom. viii. 18.

truth and judgment didst Thou bring all these things upon us because of our sins. For we have sinned and committed iniquity, departing from Thee. In all things have we trespassed, and not obeyed Thy commandments, nor kept them, neither done as Thou hast commanded us, that it might go well with us. Wherefore all that Thou hast brought upon us, and everything that Thou hast done to us, Thou hast done in true judgment. And Thou didst deliver us into the hands of lawless enemies, most hateful forsakers of God, and to an unjust king, and the most wicked in all the world. And now we cannot open our mouths: we are become a shame and reproach to Thy servants, and to them that worship Thee. Yet deliver us not up wholly, for Thy name's sake, neither disannul Thou Thy covenant; and cause not Thy mercy to depart from us, for Thy beloved Abraham's sake, for Thy servant Isaac's sake, and for Thy holy Israel's sake, to whom Thou hast spoken, and promised that Thou wouldst multiply their seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand that lieth upon the sea-shore. For we, O Lord, are become less than any nation, and be kept under this day in all the world because of our sins."[1] Here, my brother, thou mayest surely see how men such as they, men of holiness, men of courage in the midst of tribulation,—from which, however, they were delivered, the flame itself fearing to consume them,—were not silent about their sins, but confessed them, knowing that because of these sins they were deservedly and justly brought low.

4. Nay, can we be better men than Daniel himself, concerning whom God, speaking to the prince of Tyre, says by the prophet Ezekiel, "Art thou wiser than Daniel?"[2] who also is placed among the three righteous men to whom alone God saith that He would grant deliverance,—pointing, doubtless, in them to three representative righteous men,—declaring that he would deliver only Noah, Daniel, and Job, and that they should save along with themselves neither son nor daughter, but only their own souls?[3] Nevertheless, read also the prayer of Daniel, and see how, when in captivity, he confesses not only the sins of his people, but his own also, and acknow-

[1] Song of the Three Holy Children, vers. 3–14.
[2] Ezek. xxviii. 3.
[3] Ezek. xiv. 14, 18, 20.

ledges that because of these the justice of God has visited them with the punishment of captivity and with reproach. For it is thus written: "And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: and I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said: O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love Him, and to them that keep His commandments; we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from Thy precepts and from Thy judgments: neither have we hearkened unto Thy servants the prophets, which spake in Thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto Thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither Thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against Thee. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against Thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against Him; neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord, to walk in His laws which He set before us by His servants the prophets. Yea, all Israel have transgressed Thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey Thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against them. And He hath confirmed His words which He spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil; for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem. As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Thy truth. Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us; for the Lord our God is righteous in all His works which He doeth; for we obeyed not His voice. And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought Thy people forth out of the

land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten Thee renown as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly. O Lord, according to all Thy righteousness, I beseech Thee, let Thine anger and Thy fury be turned away from Thy city Jerusalem, Thy holy mountain, because, for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us. Now, therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of Thy servant, and His supplications, and cause Thy face to shine upon Thy sanctuary which is desolate, for the Lord's sake. O my God, incline Thine ear, and hear; open Thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by Thy name; for we do not present our supplications before Thee for our righteousnesses, but for Thy great mercies. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do: defer not, for Thine own sake, O my God; for Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy name. And while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin, and the sin of my people . . . "[1] Observe how he spoke first of his own sins, and then of the sins of his people. And he extols the righteousness of God, and gives praise to God for this, that He visits even His saints with the rod, not unjustly, but because of their sins. If, therefore, this be the language of men who by reason of their eminent sanctity found even encompassing flames and lions harmless, what language would befit men standing on a level so low as we occupy, seeing that, whatever righteousness we may seem to practise, we are very far from being worthy of comparison with them?

5. Lest, however, any one should think that those servants of God, whose death at the hand of barbarians you relate, ought to have been delivered from them in the same manner as the three young men were delivered from the fire, and Daniel from the lions, let such an one know that these miracles were performed in order that the kings by whom they were delivered to these punishments might believe that they worshipped the true God. For in His hidden counsel and mercy God was in this manner making provision for the salvation of these kings. It pleased Him, however, to make no such provision in the case of Antiochus the king, who

[1] Dan. ix. 3–20.

cruelly put the Maccabees to death; but He punished the heart of the obdurate king with sharper severity through their most glorious sufferings. Yet read what was said by even one of them—the sixth who suffered: "After him they brought also the sixth, who, being ready to die, said, 'Be not deceived without cause; for we suffer these things for ourselves, having sinned against God: therefore marvellous things are done unto us; but think not thou that takest in hand to strive against God and His law that thou shalt escape unpunished.'"[1] You see how these also are wise in the exercise of humility and sincerity, confessing that they are chastened because of their sins by the Lord, of whom it is written: "Whom the Lord loveth He correcteth,"[2] and "He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth;"[3] wherefore the Apostle says also, "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged; but when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."[4]

6. These things read faithfully, and proclaim faithfully; and to the utmost of your power beware, and teach others that they must beware, of murmuring against God in these trials and tribulations. You tell me that good, faithful, and holy servants of God have been cut off by the sword of the barbarians. But what matters it whether it is by sickness or by sword that they have been set free from the body? The Lord is careful as to the character with which His servants go from this world—not as to the mere circumstances of their departure, excepting this, that lingering weakness involves more suffering than a sudden death; and yet we read of this same protracted and dreadful weakness as the lot of that Job to whose righteousness God Himself, who cannot be deceived, bears such testimony.

7. Most calamitous, and much to be bewailed, is the captivity of chaste and holy women; but their God is not in the power of their captors, nor does He forsake those captives whom He knows indeed to be His own. For those holy men, the record of whose sufferings and confessions I have quoted from the Holy Scriptures, being held in captivity by enemies who had carried them away, uttered those words, which, pre-

[1] 2 Macc. vii. 18, 19. [2] Prov. iii. 12. [3] Heb. xii. 6. [4] 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32.

served in writing, we can read for ourselves, in order to make us understand that servants of God, even when they are in captivity, are not forsaken by their Lord. Nay, more, do we know what wonders of power and grace the almighty and merciful God may please to accomplish by means of these captive women even in the land of the barbarians? Be that as it may, cease not to intercede with groanings on their behalf before God, and to seek, so far as your power and His providence permits you, to do for them whatever can be done, and to give them whatever consolation can be given, as time and opportunity may be granted. A few years ago, a nun, a grand-daughter of Bishop Severus, was carried off by barbarians from the neighbourhood of Sitifa, and was by the marvellous mercy of God restored with great honour to her parents. For at the very time when the maiden entered the house of her barbarian captors, it became the scene of much distress through the sudden illness of its owners, all the barbarians—three brothers, if I mistake not, or more—being attacked with most dangerous disease. Their mother observed that the maiden was dedicated to God, and believed that by her prayers her sons might be delivered from the danger of death, which was imminent. She begged her to intercede for them, promising that if they were healed she should be restored to her parents. She fasted and prayed, and straightway was heard; for, as the result showed, the event had been appointed that this might take place. They therefore, having recovered health by this unexpected favour from God, regarded her with admiration and respect, and fulfilled the promise which their mother had made.

8. Pray, therefore, to God for them, and beseech Him to enable them to say such things as the holy Azariah, whom we have mentioned, poured forth along with other expressions in his prayer and confession before God. For in the land of their captivity these women are in circumstances similar to those of the three Hebrew youths in that land in which they could not sacrifice to the Lord their God in the manner prescribed: they cannot either bring an oblation to the altar of God, or find a priest by whom their oblation may be presented to God. May God therefore grant them grace to say to Him

what Azariah said in the following sentences of his prayer: "Neither is there at this time prince, or prophet, or leader, or burnt-offering, or sacrifice, or oblation, or incense, or place to sacrifice before Thee, and to find mercy: nevertheless, in a contrite heart and humble spirit let us be accepted. Like as in the burnt-offerings of rams and bullocks, and like as in ten thousands of fat lambs, so let our sacrifice be in Thy sight this day. And grant that we may wholly go after Thee; for they shall not be confounded that put their trust in Thee. And now we follow Thee with all our heart: we fear Thee and seek Thy face. Put us not to shame, but deal with us after Thy loving-kindness, and according to the multitude of Thy mercies. Deliver us also according to Thy marvellous works, and give glory to Thy name, O Lord; and let all them that do Thy servants hurt be ashamed: and let them be confounded in all their power and might, and let their strength be broken: and let them know that Thou art Lord, the only God, and glorious over the whole world."[1]

9. When His servants use these words, and pray fervently to God, He will stand by them, as He has been wont ever to stand by His own, and will either not permit their chaste bodies to suffer any wrong from the lust of their enemies, or if He permit this, He will not lay sin to their charge in the matter. For when the soul is not defiled by any impurity of consent to such wrong, the body also is thereby protected from all participation in the guilt; and in so far as nothing was committed or permitted by lust on the part of her who suffers, the whole blame lies with him who did the wrong, and all the violence done to the sufferer will be regarded not as implying the baseness of wanton compliance, but as a wound blamelessly endured. For such is the worth of unblemished purity in the soul, that while it remains intact, the body also retains its purity unsullied, even although by violence its members may be overpowered.

I beg your Charity to be satisfied with this letter, which is very long considering my other work (although too short to meet your wishes), and is somewhat hurriedly written, because the bearer is in haste to be gone. The Lord will furnish you

[1] Song of the Three Children, vers. 15–22.

with much more abundant consolation if you read attentively His holy word.

LETTER CXV.

(A.D. 410.)

TO FORTUNATUS, MY COLLEAGUE IN THE PRIESTHOOD, MY LORD MOST BLESSED, AND MY BROTHER BELOVED WITH PROFOUND ESTEEM, AND TO THE BRETHREN WHO ARE WITH THEE, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

YOUR Holiness is well acquainted with Faventius, a tenant on the estate of the Paratian forest. He, apprehending some injury or other at the hands of the owner of that estate, took refuge in the church at Hippo, and was there, as fugitives are wont to do, waiting till he could get the matter settled through my mediation. Becoming every day, as often happens, less and less alarmed, and in fact completely off his guard, as if his adversary had desisted from his enmity, he was, when leaving the house of a friend after supper, suddenly carried off by one Florentinus, an officer of the Count, who used in this act of violence a band of armed men sufficient for the purpose. When this was made known to me, and as yet it was unknown by whose orders or by whose hands he had been carried off, though suspicion naturally fell on the man from whose apprehended injury he had claimed the protection of the Church, I at once communicated with the tribune who is in command of the coast-guard. He sent out soldiers, but no one could be found. But in the morning we learned in what house he had passed the night, and also that he had left it after cock-crowing, with the man who had him in custody. I sent also to the place to which it was reported that he had been removed: there the officer above-named was found, but refused to allow the presbyter whom I had sent to have even a sight of his prisoner. On the following day I sent a letter requesting that he should be allowed the privilege which the Emperor appointed in cases such as his, namely, that persons summoned to appear to be tried should in the municipal court be interrogated whether they desired to spend thirty days under adequate surveillance in the town,

in order to arrange their affairs, or find funds for the expense of their trial, my expectation being that within that period of time we might perhaps bring his matters to some amicable settlement. Already, however, he had gone farther under charge of the officer Florentinus; but my fear is, lest perchance, if he be brought before the tribunal of the magistrate,[1] he suffer some injustice. For although the integrity of that judge is widely famed as incorruptible, Faventius has for his adversary a man of very great wealth. To secure that money may not prevail in that court, I beg your Holiness, my beloved lord and venerable brother, to have the kindness to give the accompanying letter to the honourable magistrate, a man very much beloved by us, and to read this letter also to him; for I have not thought it necessary to write twice the same statement of the case. I trust that he will delay the hearing of the case, because I do not know whether the man is innocent or guilty. I trust also that he will not overlook the fact that the laws have been violated in his having been suddenly carried off, without being brought, as was enacted by the Emperor, before the municipal court, in order to his being asked whether he wished to accept the benefit of the delay of thirty days, so that in this way we may get the affair settled between him and his adversary.

LETTER CXVI.

(ENCLOSED IN THE FOREGOING LETTER.)

TO GENEROSUS, MY NOBLE AND JUSTLY DISTINGUISHED LORD, MY HONOURED AND MUCH-LOVED SON, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

ALTHOUGH the praises and favourable report of your administration and your own illustrious good name always give me the greatest pleasure, because of the love which we feel due to your merit and to your benevolence, on no occasion have I hitherto been burdensome to your Excellency as an intercessor requesting any favour from you, my much-loved lord and justly-honoured son. When, however, your Excellency has

[1] Consularis.

learned from the letters which I have sent to my venerable brother and colleague, Fortunatus, what has occurred in the town in which I serve the Church of God, your kind heart will at once perceive the necessity under which I have been constrained to trespass by this petition on your time, already fully occupied. I am perfectly assured that, cherishing towards us the feeling which, in the name of Christ, we are fully warranted to expect, you will act in this matter as becomes not only an upright, but also a Christian magistrate.

LETTER CXVII.

(A.D. 410.)

FROM DIOSCORUS TO AUGUSTINE.

To you, who esteem the substance, not the style of expression, as important, any formal preamble to this letter would be not only unnecessary, but irksome. Therefore, without further preface, I beg your attention. The aged Alypius had often promised, in answer to my request, that he would, with your help, furnish a reply to a very few brief questions of mine in regard to the Dialogues of Cicero; and as he is said to be at present in Mauritania, I ask and earnestly entreat you to condescend to give, without his assistance, those answers which, even had your brother been present, it would doubtless have fallen to you to furnish. What I require is not money, it is not gold; though, if you possessed these, you would, I am sure, be willing to give them to me for any fit object. This request of mine you can grant without effort, by merely speaking. I might importune you at greater length, and through many of your dear friends; but I know your disposition, that you do not desire to be solicited, but show kindness readily to all, if only there be nothing improper in the thing requested: and there is absolutely nothing improper in what I ask. Be this, however, as it may, I beg you to do me this kindness, for I am on the point of embarking on a voyage. You know how very painful it is to me to be burdensome to any one, and much more to one of your frank disposition; but God alone knows how irresistible is the pressure of the necessity under

which I have made this application. For, taking leave of you, and committing myself to divine protection, I am about to undertake a voyage; and you know the ways of men, how prone they are to censure, and you see how any one will be regarded as illiterate and stupid who, when questions are addressed to him, can return no answer. Therefore, I implore you, answer all my queries without delay. Send me not away downcast. I ask this that so I may see my parents; for on this one errand I have sent Cerdo to you, and I now delay only till he return. My brother Zenobius has been appointed imperial remembrancer,[1] and has sent me a free pass for my journey, with provisions. If I am not worthy of your reply, let at least the fear of my forfeiting these provisions by delay move you to give answers to my little questions.[2]

May the most high God spare you long to us in health! Papas salutes your Excellency most cordially.

LETTER CXVIII.

(A.D. 410.)

AUGUSTINE TO DIOSCORUS.

CHAP. I. 1. You have sent suddenly upon me a countless multitude of questions, by which you must have purposed to blockade me on every side, or rather bury me completely, even if you were under the impression that I was otherwise unoccupied and at leisure; for how could I, even though wholly at leisure, furnish the solution of so many questions to one in such haste as you are, and, in fact, as you write, on the eve of a journey? I would, indeed, be prevented by the mere number of the questions to be resolved, even if their solution were easy. But they are so perplexingly intricate,

[1] This officer, "magister memoriæ," was a private secretary of the emperor, and had, among other privileges of his office, the right of granting liberty to private individuals to travel by the imperial conveyances along the great highways connecting Rome with the remotest boundaries of the provinces. See Suetonius, *Vita Augusti*, chap. xlix., and Pliny, *Letters*, Books x.–xiv., and *Codex Justiniani*, Book xii. Title 51.

[2] We conjecture from the context that this expresses the force of the obscure words, "saltem timeantur annonæ."

and so hard, that even if they were few in number, and engaging me when otherwise wholly at leisure, they would, by the mere time required, exhaust my powers of application, and wear out my strength. I would, however, fain snatch you forcibly away from the midst of those inquiries in which you so much delight, and fix you down among the cares which engage my attention, in order that you may either learn not to be unprofitably curious, or desist from presuming to impose the task of feeding and fostering your curiosity upon men among whose cares one of the greatest is to repress and curb those who are too inquisitive. For if time and pains are devoted to writing anything to you, how much better and more profitably are these employed in endeavours to cut off those vain and treacherous passions (which are to be guarded against with a caution proportioned to the ease with which they impose upon us, by their being disguised and cloaked under the semblance of virtue and the name of liberal studies), rather than in causing them to be, by our service, or rather obsequiousness, so to speak, roused to a more vehement assertion of the despotism under which they so oppress your excellent spirit.

2. For tell me what good purpose is served by the many Dialogues which you have read, if they have in no way helped you towards the discovery and attainment of the end of all your actions? For by your letter you indicate plainly enough what you have proposed to yourself as the end to be attained by all this most ardent study of yours, which is at once useless to yourself and troublesome to me. For when you were in your letter using every means to persuade me to answer the questions which you sent, you wrote these words: "I might importune you at greater length, and through many of your dear friends; but I know your disposition, that you do not desire to be solicited, but show kindness readily to all, if only there be nothing improper in the thing requested: and there is absolutely nothing improper in what I ask. Be this, however, as it may, I beg you to do me this kindness, for I am on the point of embarking on a voyage." In these words of your letter you are indeed right in your opinion as to myself, that I am desirous of showing kindness to all, if only there be nothing improper in the request made; but it is not

my opinion that there is nothing improper in what you ask. For when I consider how a bishop is distracted and overwrought by the cares of his office clamouring on every side, it does not seem to me proper for him suddenly, as if deaf, to withdraw himself from all these, and devote himself to the work of expounding to a single student some unimportant questions in the Dialogues of Cicero. The impropriety of this you yourself apprehend, although, carried away with zeal in the pursuit of your studies, you will by no means give heed to it. For what other construction can I put on the fact that, after saying that in this matter there is absolutely nothing improper, you have immediately subjoined: "Be this, however, as it may, I beg you to do me this kindness, for I am on the point of embarking on a voyage"? For this intimates that in your view, at least, there is no impropriety in your request, but that whatever impropriety may be in it, you nevertheless ask me to do what you ask, because you are about to go on a voyage. Now what is the force of this supplementary plea —"I am on the point of embarking on a voyage"? Do you mean that, unless you were in these circumstances, I ought not to do you service in which anything improper may be involved? You think, forsooth, that the impropriety can be washed away by salt water. But even were it so, my share at least of the fault would remain unexpiated, because I do not propose undertaking a voyage.

3. You write, further, that I know how very painful it is to you to be burdensome to any one, and you solemnly protest that God alone knows how irresistible is the necessity under which you make the application. When I came to this statement in your letter, I turned my attention eagerly to learn the nature of the necessity; and, behold, you bring it before me in these words: "You know the ways of men, how prone they are to censure, and how any one will be regarded as illiterate and stupid who, when questions are addressed to him, can return no answer." On reading this sentence, I felt a burning desire to reply to your letter; for, by the morbid weakness of mind which this indicated, you pierced my inmost heart, and forced your way into the midst of my cares, so that I could not refuse to minister to your relief, so far

as God might enable me—not by devising a solution of your difficulties, but by breaking the connection between your happiness and the wretched support on which it now insecurely hangs, viz. the opinions of men, and fastening it to a hold which is firm and immovable. Do you not, O Dioscorus, remember an ingenious line of your favourite Persius, in which he not only rebukes your folly, but administers to your boyish head, if you have only sense to feel it, a deserved correction, restraining your vanity with the words, "To know is nothing in your eyes unless another knows that you know"?[1] You have, as I said before, read so many Dialogues, and devoted your attention to so many discussions of philosophers—tell me which of them has placed the chief end of his actions in the applause of the vulgar, or in the opinion even of good and wise men? But you,—and what should make you the more ashamed,—you, when on the eve of sailing away from Africa, give evidence of your having made signal progress, forsooth, in your studies here, when you affirm that the only reason why you impose the task of expounding Cicero to you upon bishops, who are already oppressed with work and engrossed with matters of a very different nature, is, that you fear that if, when questioned by men prone to censure, you cannot answer, you will be regarded by them as illiterate and stupid. O cause well worthy to occupy the hours which bishops devote to study while other men sleep!

4. You seem to me to be prompted to mental effort night and day by no other motive than ambition to be praised by men for your industry and acquisitions in learning. Although I have ever regarded this as fraught with danger to persons who are striving after the true and the right, I am now, by your case, more convinced of the danger than before. For it is due to no other cause than this same pernicious habit that you have failed to see by what motive we might be induced to grant to you what you asked; for as by a perverted judgment you yourself are urged on to acquire a knowledge of the things about which you put questions, from no other motive than that you may receive praise or escape censure from men, you imagine that we, by a like perversity of judgment,

[1] "Seire tuum nihil est nisi te scire hoc sciat alter."—Persius, *Sat.* i. 27.

are to be influenced by the considerations alleged in your request. Would that, when we declare to you that by your writing such things concerning yourself we are moved, not to grant your request, but to reprove and correct you, we might be able to effect for you also complete emancipation from the influence of a boon so worthless and deceitful as the applause of men! "It is the manner of men," you say, "to be prone to censure." What then? "Any one who can make no reply when questions are addressed to him," you say, "will be regarded as illiterate and stupid." Behold, then, I ask you a question not concerning something in the books of Cicero, whose meaning, perchance, his readers may not be able to find, but concerning your own letter and the meaning of your own words. My question is: Why did you not say, "Any one who can make no reply will be *proved* to be illiterate and stupid," but prefer to say, "He will be *regarded* as illiterate and stupid"? Why, if not for this reason, that you yourself already understand well enough that the person who fails to answer such questions is not in reality, but only in the opinion of some, illiterate and stupid? But I warn you that he who fears to be subjected to the edge of the pruning-hook by the tongues of such men is a sapless log, and is therefore not only regarded as illiterate and stupid, but is actually such, and proved to be so.

5. Perhaps you will say, "But seeing that I am not stupid, and that I am specially earnest in striving not to be stupid, I am reluctant even to be regarded as stupid." And rightly so; but I ask, What is your motive in this reluctance? For in stating why you did not hesitate to burden us with those questions which you wish to have solved and explained, you said that this was the reason, and that this was the end, and an end so necessary in your estimation that you said it was of overwhelming urgency,—lest, forsooth, if you were posed with these questions and gave no answer, you should be regarded as illiterate and stupid by men prone to censure. Now, I ask, is this [jealousy as to your own reputation] the whole reason why you beg this from us, or is it because of some ulterior object that you are unwilling to be thought illiterate and stupid? If this be the whole reason, you see,

as I think, that this one thing [the praise of men] is the end pursued by that vehement zeal of yours, by which, as you admit, a burden is imposed on us. But, from Dioscorus, what can be to us a burden, except that burden which Dioscorus himself unconsciously bears,—a burden which he will begin to feel only when he attempts to rise,—a burden of which I would fain believe that it is not so bound to him as to defy his efforts to shake his shoulders free? And this I say not because these questions engage your studies, but because they are studied by you for such an end. For surely you by this time feel that this end is trivial, unsubstantial, and light as air. It is also apt to produce in the soul what may be likened to a dangerous swelling, beneath which lurk the germs of decay, and by it the eye of the mind becomes suffused, so that it cannot discern the riches of truth. Believe this, my Dioscorus, it is true: so shall I enjoy thee in unfeigned longing for truth, and in that essential dignity of truth by the shadow of which you are turned aside. If I have failed to convince you of this by the method which I have now used, I know no other that I can use. For you do not see it; nor can you possibly see it so long as you build your joys on the crumbling foundation of human applause.

6. If, however, this be not the end aimed at in these actions and by this zeal of yours, but there is some other ulterior reason for your unwillingness to be regarded as illiterate and stupid, I ask what that reason is. If it be to remove impediments to the acquisition of temporal riches, or the obtaining of a wife, or the grasping of honours, and other things of that kind which are flowing past with a headlong current, and dragging to the bottom those who fall into them, it is assuredly not our duty to help you towards that end, nay, rather we ought to turn you away from it. For we do not so forbid your fixing the aim of your studies in the precarious possession of renown as to make you leave, as it were, the waters of the Mincius and enter the Eridanus, into which, perchance, the Mincius would carry you even without yourself making the change. For when the vanity of human applause has failed to satisfy the soul, because it furnishes for its nourishment nothing real and substantial, this same

eager desire compels the mind to go on to something else as more rich and productive; and if, nevertheless, this also belong to the things which pass away with time, it is as when one river leads us into another, so that there can be no rest from our miseries so long as the end aimed at in our discharge of duty is placed in that which is unstable. We desire, therefore, that in some firm and immutable good you should fix the home of your most steadfast efforts, and the perfectly secure resting-place of all your good and honourable activity. Is it, perchance, your intention, if you succeed by the breath of propitious fame, or even by spreading your sails for its fitful gusts, in reaching that earthly happiness of which I have spoken, to make it subservient to the acquisition of the other—the sure and true and satisfying good? But to me it does not seem probable—and truth itself forbids the supposition—that it should be reached either by such a circuitous way when it is at hand, or at such cost when it is freely given.

7. Perhaps you think that we ought to turn the praise of men itself to good account as an instrument for making others accessible to counsels regarding that which is good and useful; and perhaps you are anxious lest, if men regard you as illiterate and stupid, they think you unworthy to receive their earnest or patient attention, if you were either exhorting any one to do well, or reproving the malice and wickedness of an evil-doer. If, in proposing these questions, you contemplated this righteous and beneficent end, we have certainly been wronged by your not giving the preference to this in your letter as the consideration by which we might be moved either to grant willingly what you asked, or, if declining your request, to do so on the ground of some other cause which might perchance prevent us, but not on the ground of our being ashamed to accept the position of serving or even not resisting the aspirations of your vanity. For, I pray you, consider how much better and more profitable it is for you to receive from us with far more certainty and with less loss of time those principles of truth by which you can for yourself refute all that is false, and by so doing be prevented from cherishing an opinion so false and contemptible as this—that

you are learned and intelligent if you have studied with a zeal in which there is more pride than prudence the worn-out errors of many writers of a bygone age. But this opinion I do not suppose you now to hold, for surely I have not in vain spoken so long to Dioscorus things so manifestly true; and from this, as understood, I proceed with my letter.

CHAP. II. 8. Wherefore, seeing that you do not consider a man illiterate and stupid merely on the ground of ignorance of these things, but only if he be ignorant of the truth itself, and that, consequently, the opinions of any one who has written or may have written on these subjects are either true, and therefore are already held by you, or false, and therefore you may be content not to know them, and need not be consumed with vain solicitude about knowing the variety of the opinions of other men under the fear of otherwise remaining illiterate and stupid,—seeing, I say, that this is the case, let us now, if you please, consider whether, in the event of other men, who are, as you say, prone to censure, finding you ignorant of these things, and therefore regarding you, though falsely, as an illiterate and stupid person, this mistake of theirs ought to have so much weight with you as to make it not unseemly for you to apply to bishops for instruction in these things. I propose this on the assumption that we now believe you to be seeking this instruction in order that by it you may be helped in recommending the truth to men, and in reclaiming men who, if they supposed you to be illiterate and stupid in regard to those books of Cicero, would regard you as a person from whom they considered it unworthy of them to receive any useful or profitable instruction. Believe me, you are under a mistake.

9. For, in the first place, I do not at all see that, in the countries in which you are so afraid of being esteemed deficient in education and acuteness, there are any persons who will ask you a single question about these matters. Both in this country, to which you came to learn these things, and at Rome, you know by experience how little they are esteemed, and that, in consequence, they are neither taught nor learned; and throughout all Africa, so far are you from being troubled by any such questioner, that you cannot find any one who

will be troubled with your questions, and are compelled by the dearth of such persons to send your questions to bishops to be solved by them: as if, indeed, these bishops, although in their youth, under the influence of the same ardour—let me rather say error—which carries you away, they were at pains to learn these things as matters of great moment, permitted them still to remain in memory now that their heads are white with age and they are burdened with the responsibilities of episcopal office; or as if, supposing them to desire to retain these things in memory, greater and graver cares would not in spite of their desire banish them from their hearts; or as if, in the event of some of these things lingering in recollection by the force of long habit, they would not wish rather to bury in utter oblivion what was thus remembered, than to answer senseless questions at a time when, even amidst the comparative leisure enjoyed in the schools and in the lecture-rooms of rhetoricians, they seem to have so lost both voice and vigour that, in order to have instruction imparted concerning them, it is deemed necessary to send from Carthage to Hippo, —a place in which all such things are so unwonted and so wholly foreign, that if, in taking the trouble of writing an answer to your question, I wished to look at any passage to discover the order of thought in the context preceding or following the words requiring exposition, I would be utterly unable to find a manuscript of the works of Cicero. However, these teachers of rhetoric in Carthage who have failed to satisfy you in this matter are not only not blamed, but, on the contrary, commended by me, if, as I suppose, they have not forgotten that the scene of these contests was wont to be, not the Roman forum, but the Greek gymnasia. But when you have applied your mind to these gymnasia, and have found even them to be in such things bare and cold, the church of the Christians of Hippo occurred to you as a place where you might lay down your cares, because the bishop now occupying that see at one time took fees for instructing boys in these things. But, on the one hand, I do not wish you to be still a boy, and, on the other hand, it is not becoming for me, either for a fee or as a favour, to be dealing now in childish things. This, therefore, being the case—

seeing, that is to say, that these two great cities, Rome and Carthage, the living centres of Latin literature, neither try your patience by asking you such questions as you speak of, nor care patiently to listen to you when you propound them, I am amazed in a degree beyond all expression that a young man of your good sense should be afraid lest you should be afflicted with any questioner on these subjects in the cities of Greece and of the East. You are much more likely to hear jackdaws [1] in Africa than this manner of conversation in those lands.

10. Suppose, however, in the next place, that I am wrong, and that perchance some one should arise putting questions like these,—a phenomenon the more unwelcome because in those parts peculiarly absurd,—are you not much more afraid lest far more readily men arise who, being Greeks, and finding you settled in Greece, and acquainted with the Greek language as your mother tongue, may ask you some things in the original works of their philosophers which Cicero may not have put into his treatises? If this happen, what reply will you make? Will you say that you preferred to learn these things from the books of Latin rather than of Greek authors? By such an answer you will, in the first place, put an affront upon Greece; and you know how men of that nation resent this. And in the next place, they being now wounded and angry, how readily will you find what you are too anxious to avoid, that they will count you on the one hand stupid, because you preferred to learn the opinions of the Greek philosophers, or, more properly speaking, some isolated and scattered tenets of their philosophy, in Latin dialogues, rather than to study the complete and connected system of their opinions in the Greek originals,—and, on the other hand, illiterate, because, although ignorant of so many things written in your language, you have unsuccessfully laboured to gather some of them together from writings in a foreign tongue. Or will you perhaps reply that you did not despise the Greek writings on these subjects, but that you devoted your atten-

[1] Corniculas. The lapse of centuries may have introduced into the north of Africa birds unknown in Augustine's time. The translator has seen these birds in Egypt.

tion first to the study of Latin works, and now, proficient in these, are beginning to inquire after Greek learning? If this does not make you blush, to confess that you, being a Greek, have in your boyhood learned Latin, and are now, like a man of some foreign nation,[1] desirous of studying Greek literature, surely you will not blush to own that in the department of Latin literature you are ignorant of some things, of which you may perceive how many versed in Latin learning are equally ignorant, if you will only consider that, although living in the midst of so many learned men in Carthage, you assure me that it is under the pressure of necessity that you impose this burden on me.

11. Finally, suppose that you, being asked all those questions which you have submitted to me, have been able to answer them all. Behold! you are now spoken of as most learned and most acute; behold! now this insignificant breath of Greek laudation raises you to heaven. Be it yours now to remember your responsibilities and the end for which you coveted these praises, namely, that to men who have been easily won to admire you by these trifles, and who are now hanging most affectionately and eagerly on your lips, you may impart some truly important and wholesome instruction; and I should like to know whether you possess, and can rightly impart to others, that which is truly most important and wholesome. For it is absurd if, after learning many unnecessary things with a view to preparing the ears of men to receive what is necessary, you be found not to possess those necessary things for the reception of which you have by these unnecessary things prepared the way; it is absurd if, while busying yourself with learning things by which you may win men's attention, you refuse to learn that which may be poured into their minds when their attention is secured. But if you reply that you have already learned this, and say that the truth supremely necessary is Christian doctrine, which I know that you esteem above all other things, placing in it alone your hope of everlasting salvation, then surely this does not demand a knowledge of the Dialogues of Cicero, and a collection of the beggarly and divided opinions of other men, in

[1] Barbarum.

order to your persuading men to give it a hearing. Let your character and manner of life command the attention of those who are to receive any such teaching from you. I would not have you open the way for teaching truth by first teaching what must be afterwards unlearned.

12. For if the knowledge of the discordant and mutually contradictory opinions of others is of any service to him who would obtain an entrance for Christian truth in overthrowing the opposition of error, it is useful only in the way of preventing the assailant of the truth from being at liberty to fix his eye solely on the work of controverting your tenets, while carefully hiding his own from view. For the knowledge of the truth is of itself sufficient both to detect and to subvert all errors, even those which may not have been heard before, if only they are brought forward. If, however, in order to secure not only the demolition of open errors, but also the rooting out of those which lurk in darkness, it is necessary for you to be acquainted with the erroneous opinions which others have advanced, let both eye and ear be wakeful, I beseech you,—look well and listen well whether any of our assailants bring forward a single argument from Anaximenes and from Anaxagoras, when, though the Stoic and Epicurean philosophies were more recent and taught largely, even their ashes are not so warm as that a single spark can be struck out from them against the Christian faith. The din which resounds in the battle-field of controversy now comes from innumerable small companies and cliques of sectaries, some of them easily discomfited, others presuming to make bold resistance,—such as the partisans of Donatus, Maximian, and Manichæus here, or the unruly herds of Arians, Eunomians, Macedonians, and Cataphrygians and other pests which abound in the countries to which you are on your way. If you shrink from the task of acquainting yourself with the errors of all these sects, what occasion have we in defending the Christian religion to inquire after the tenets of Anaximenes, and with idle curiosity to awaken anew controversies which have slept for ages, when already the cavillings and arguments even of some of the heretics who claimed the glory of the Christian name, such as the Marcionites and the Sabellians, and many more, have been

put to silence? Nevertheless, if it be necessary, as I have said, to know beforehand some of the opinions which war against the truth, and become thoroughly conversant with these, it is our duty to give a place in such study to the heretics who call themselves Christians, much rather than to Anaxagoras and Democritus.

CHAP. III. 13. Again, whoever may put to you the questions which you have propounded to us, let him understand that, under the guidance of deeper erudition and greater wisdom, you are ignorant of things like these. For if Themistocles regarded it as a small matter that he was looked upon as imperfectly educated when he had declined to play on the lyre at a banquet, and at the same time, when, after he had confessed ignorance of this accomplishment, one said, "What, then, do you know?" gave as his reply, "The art of making a small republic great"—are you to hesitate about admitting ignorance in trifles like these, when it is in your power to answer any one who may ask, "What, then, do you know?"—"The secret by which without such knowledge a man may be blessed"? And if you do not yet possess this secret, you act in searching into those other matters with as blind perversity as if, when labouring under some dangerous disease of the body, you eagerly sought after dainties in food and finery in dress, instead of physic and physicians. For this attainment ought not to be put off upon any pretext whatever, and no other knowledge ought, especially in our age, to receive a prior place in your studies. And now see how easily you may have this knowledge if you desire it. He who inquires how he may attain a blessed life is assuredly inquiring after nothing else than this: where is the highest good? in other words, wherein resides man's supreme good, not according to the perverted and hasty opinions of men, but according to the sure and immovable truth? Now its residence is not found by any one except in the body, or in the mind, or in God, or in two of these, or in the three combined. If, then, you have learned that neither the supreme good nor any part whatever of the supreme good is in the body, the remaining alternatives are, that it is in the mind, or in God, or in both combined. And if now you have also learned that what is true of

the body in this respect is equally true of the mind, what now remains but God Himself as the One in whom resides man's supreme good?—not that there are no other goods, but that good is called the supreme good to which all others are related. For every one is blessed when he enjoys that for the sake of which he desires to have all other things, seeing that it is loved for its own sake, and not on account of something else. And the supreme good is said to be there because at this point nothing is found towards which the supreme good can go forth, or to which it is related. In it is the resting-place of desire; in it is assured fruition; in it the most tranquil satisfaction of a will morally perfect.

14. Give me a man who sees at once that the body is not the good of the mind, but that the mind is rather the good of the body: with such a man we would, of course, forbear from inquiring whether the highest good of which we speak, or any part of it, is in the body. For that the mind is better than the body is a truth which it would be utter folly to deny. Equally absurd would it be to deny that that which gives a happy life, or any part of a happy life, is better than that which receives the boon. The mind, therefore, does not receive from the body either the supreme good or any part of the supreme good. Men who do not see this have been blinded by that sweetness of carnal pleasures which they do not discern to be a consequence of imperfect health. Now, perfect health of body shall be the consummation of the immortality of the whole man. For God has endowed the soul with a nature so powerful, that from that consummate fulness of joy which is promised to the saints in the end of time, some portion overflows also upon the lower part of our nature, the body,—not the blessedness which is proper to the part which enjoys and understands, but the plenitude of health, that is, the vigour of incorruption. Men who, as I have said, do not see this war with each other in unsatisfactory debates, each maintaining the view which may please his own fancy, but all placing the supreme good of man in the body, and so stir up crowds of disorderly carnal minds, of whom the Epicureans have flourished in pre-eminent estimation with the unlearned multitude.

15. Give me a man who sees at once, moreover, that when the mind is happy, it is happy not by good which belongs to itself, else it would never be unhappy: and with such a man we would, of course, forbear from inquiring whether that highest and, so to speak, bliss-bestowing good, or any part of it, is in the mind. For when the mind is elated with joy in itself, as if in good which belongs to itself, it is proud. But when the mind perceives itself to be mutable,—a fact which may be learned from this, even though nothing else proved it, that the mind from being foolish may be made wise,—and apprehends that wisdom is unchangeable, it must at the same time apprehend that wisdom is superior to its own nature, and that it finds more abundant and abiding joy in the communications and light of wisdom than in itself. Thus desisting and subsiding from boasting and self-conceit, it strives to cling to God, and to be recruited and reformed by Him who is unchangeable; whom it now understands to be the Author not only of every species of all things with which it comes in contact, either by the bodily senses or by intellectual faculties, but also of even the very capacity of taking form before any form has been taken, since the formless is defined to be that which can receive a form. Therefore it feels its own instability more, just in proportion as it clings less to God, whose being is perfect: it discerns also that the perfection of His being is consummate because He is immutable, and therefore neither gains nor loses, but that in itself every change by which it gains capacity for perfect clinging to God is advantageous, but every change by which it loses is pernicious, and further, that all loss tends towards destruction; and although it is not manifest whether any thing is ultimately destroyed, it is manifest to every one that the loss brings destruction so far that the object no longer is what it was. Whence the mind infers that the one reason why things suffer loss, or are liable to suffer loss, is, that they were made out of nothing; so that their property of being, and of permanence, and the arrangement whereby each finds even according to its imperfections its own place in the complex whole, all depend on the goodness and omnipotence of Him whose being is perfect,[1] and who

[1] Qui summe est.

is the Creator able to make out of nothing not only something, but something great; and that the first sin, *i.e.* the first voluntary loss, is rejoicing in its own power: for it rejoices in something less than would be the source of its joy if it rejoiced in the power of God, which is unquestionably greater. Not perceiving this, and looking only to the capacities of the human mind, and the great beauty of its achievements in word and deed, some, who would have been ashamed to place man's supreme good in the body, have, by placing it in the mind, assigned to it unquestionably a lower sphere than that assigned to it by unsophisticated reason. Among Greek philosophers who hold these views, the chief place both in number of adherents and in subtlety of disputation has been held by the Stoics, who have, however, in consequence of their opinion that in nature everything is material, succeeded in turning the mind rather from carnal than material objects.

16. Among those, again, who say that our supreme and only good is to enjoy God, by whom both we ourselves and all things were made, the most eminent have been the Platonists, who not unreasonably judged it to belong to their duty to confute the Stoics and Epicureans—the latter especially, and almost exclusively. The Academic School is identical with the Platonists, as is shown plainly enough by the links of unbroken succession connecting the schools. For if you ask who was the predecessor of Arcesilas, the first who, announcing no doctrine of his own, set himself to the one work of refuting the Stoics and Epicureans, you will find that it was Polemo; ask who preceded Polemo, it was Xenocrates; but Xenocrates was Plato's disciple, and by him appointed his successor in the academy. Wherefore, as to this question concerning the supreme good, if we set aside the representatives of conflicting views, and consider the abstract question, you find at once that two errors confront each other as diametrically opposed—the one declaring the body, and the other declaring the mind to be the seat of the supreme good of men. You find also that truly enlightened reason, by which God is perceived to be our supreme good, is opposed to both of these errors, but does not impart the knowledge of what is true until it has first made men unlearn what is false. If now you

consider the question in connection with the advocates of different views, you will find the Epicureans and Stoics most keenly contending with each other, and the Platonists, on the other hand, endeavouring to decide the controversy between them, concealing the truth which they held, and devoting themselves only to prove and overthrow the vain confidence with which the others adhered to error.

17. It was not in the power of the Platonists, however, to be so efficient in supporting the side of reason enlightened by truth, as the others were in supporting their own errors. For from them all there was then withheld that example of divine humility, which, in the fulness of time,[1] was furnished by our Lord Jesus Christ,—that one example before which, even in the mind of the most headstrong and arrogant, all pride bends, breaks, and dies. And therefore the Platonists, not being able by their authority to lead the mass of mankind, blinded by love of earthly things, into faith in things invisible,—although they saw them moved, especially by the arguments of the Epicureans, not only to drink freely the cup of the pleasures of the body to which they were naturally inclined, but even to plead for these affirming that they constitute man's highest good; although, moreover, they saw that those who were moved to abstinence from these pleasures by the praise of virtue found it easier to regard pleasure as having its true seat in the soul, whence the good actions, concerning which they were able, in some measure, to form an opinion, proceeded,—at the same time, saw that if they attempted to introduce into the minds of men the notion of something divine and supremely immutable, which cannot be reached by any one of the bodily senses, but is apprehensible only by reason, which, nevertheless, surpasses in its nature the mind itself, and were to teach that this is God, set before the human soul to be enjoyed by it when purged from all stains of human desires, in whom alone every longing after happiness finds rest, and in whom alone we ought to find the consummation of all good,—men would not understand them, and would much more readily award the palm to their antagonists, whether Epicureans or Stoics; the result of which would be a thing most disastrous to the

[1] Opportunissimo tempore.

human race, namely, that the doctrine, which is true and profitable, would become sullied by the contempt of the uneducated masses. So much in regard to Ethical questions.

18. As to Physics, if the Platonists taught that the originating cause of all natures is immaterial wisdom, and if, on the other hand, the rival sects of philosophers never got above material things, while the beginning of all things was attributed by some to atoms, by others to the four elements, in which fire was of special power in the construction of all things,—who could fail to see to which opinion a favourable verdict would be given, when the great mass of unthinking men are enthralled by material things, and can in no wise comprehend that an immaterial power could form the universe?

19. The department of dialectic questions remains to be discussed; for, as you are aware, all questions in the pursuit of wisdom are classified under three heads,—Ethics, Physics, and Dialectics. When, therefore, the Epicureans said that the senses are never deceived, and, though the Stoics admitted that they sometimes are mistaken, both placed in the senses the standard by which truth is to be comprehended, who would listen to the Platonists when both of these sects opposed them? Who would look upon them as entitled to be esteemed men at all, and much less wise men, if, without hesitation or qualification, they affirmed not only that there is something which cannot be discerned by touch, or smell, or taste, or hearing, or sight, and which cannot be conceived of by any image borrowed from the things with which the senses acquaint us, but that this alone truly exists, and is alone capable of being perceived, because it is alone unchangeable and eternal, but is perceived only by reason, the faculty whereby alone truth, in so far as it can be discovered by us, is found?

20. Seeing, therefore, that the Platonists held opinions which they could not impart to men enthralled by the flesh; seeing also that they were not of such authority among the common people as to persuade them to accept what they ought to believe until the mind should be trained to that condition in which these things can be understood,—they chose to hide their own opinions, and to content themselves with

arguing against those who, although they affirmed that the discovery of truth is made through the senses of the body, boasted that they had found the truth. And truly, what occasion have we to inquire as to the nature of their teaching? We know that it was not divine, nor invested with any divine authority. But this one fact merits our attention, that whereas Plato is in many ways most clearly proved by Cicero to have placed both the supreme good and the causes of things, and the certainty of the processes of reason, in Wisdom, not human, but divine, whence in some way the light of human wisdom is derived—in Wisdom which is wholly immutable, and in Truth always consistent with itself; and whereas we also learn from Cicero that the followers of Plato laboured to overthrow the philosophers known as Epicureans and Stoics, who placed the supreme good, the causes of things, and the certainty of the processes of reason, in the nature either of body or of mind,—the controversy had continued rolling on with successive centuries, so that even at the commencement of the Christian era, when the faith of things invisible and eternal was with saving power preached by means of visible miracles to men, who could neither see nor imagine anything beyond things material, these same Epicureans and Stoics are found in the Acts of the Apostles to have opposed themselves to the blessed Apostle Paul, who was beginning to scatter the seeds of that faith among the Gentiles.

21. By which thing it seems to me to be sufficiently proved that the errors of the Gentiles in ethics, physics, and the mode of seeking truth, errors many and manifold, but conspicuously represented in these two schools of philosophy, continued even down to the Christian era, notwithstanding the fact that the learned assailed them most vehemently, and employed both remarkable skill and abundant labour in subverting them. Yet these errors we see in our time to have been already so completely silenced, that now in our schools of rhetoric the question what their opinions were is scarcely ever mentioned; and these controversies have been now so completely eradicated or suppressed in even the Greek gymnasia, notably fond of discussion, that whenever now any school of error lifts up its head against the truth, *i.e.* against the Church of Christ, it

does not venture to leap into the arena except under the shield of the Christian name. Whence it is obvious that the Platonist school of philosophers felt it necessary, having changed those few things in their opinions which Christian teaching condemned, to submit with pious homage to Christ, the only King who is invincible, and to apprehend the Incarnate Word of God, at whose command the truth which they had even feared to publish was immediately believed.

22. To Him, my Dioscorus, I desire you to submit yourself with unreserved piety, and I wish you to prepare for yourself no other way of seizing and holding the truth than that which has been prepared by Him who, as God, saw the weakness of our goings. In that way the first part is humility; the second, humility; the third, humility: and this I would continue to repeat as often as you might ask direction, not that there are no other instructions which may be given, but because, unless humility precede, accompany, and follow every good action which we perform, being at once the object which we keep before our eyes, the support to which we cling, and the monitor by which we are restrained, pride wrests wholly from our hand any good work on which we are congratulating ourselves.[1] All other vices are to be apprehended when we are doing wrong; but pride is to be feared even when we do right actions, lest those things which are done in a praiseworthy manner be spoiled by the desire for praise itself. Wherefore, as that most illustrious orator, on being asked what seemed to him the first thing to be observed in the art of eloquence, is said to have replied, Delivery; and when he was asked what was the second thing, replied again, Delivery; and when asked what was the third thing, still gave no other reply than this, Delivery; so if you were to ask me, however often you might repeat the question, what are the instructions of the Christian religion, I would be disposed to answer always and only,

[1] We give the original of this exquisite sentence, both for its intrinsic value, and because it is a good example of that antithetic style of writing which makes the exact and felicitous rendering of Augustine's words into any other language peculiarly difficult: Nisi humilitas omnia quæcumque bene facimus et præcesserit, et comitetur, et consecuta fuerit, et proposita quam intueamur, et apposita cui adhæreamus, et imposita qua reprimamur, jam nobis de aliquo bono facto gaudentibus totum extorquet de manu superbia.

"Humility," although, perchance, necessity might constrain me to speak also of other things.

CHAP. IV. 23. To this most wholesome humility, in which our Lord Jesus Christ is our teacher—having submitted to humiliation that He might instruct us in this—to this humility, I say, the most formidable adversary is a certain kind of most unenlightened knowledge, if I may so call it, in which we congratulate ourselves on knowing what may have been the views of Anaximenes, Anaxagoras, Pythagoras, Democritus, and others of the same kind, imagining that by this we become learned men and scholars, although such attainments are far removed from true learning and erudition. For the man who has learned that God is not extended or diffused through space, either finite or infinite, so as to be greater in one part and less in another, but that He is wholly present everywhere, as the Truth is, of which no one in his senses will affirm that it is partly in one place, partly in another—and the Truth is God Himself—such a man will not be moved by the opinions of any philosopher soever who believes [like Anaximenes] that the infinite air around us is the true God. What matters it to such a man though he be ignorant what bodily form they speak of, since they speak of a form which is bounded on all sides? What matters it to him whether it was only as an Academician, and merely for the purpose of confuting Anaximenes, who had said that God is a material existence,—for air is material,—that Cicero objected that God must have form and beauty?[1] or himself perceived that truth has immaterial form and beauty, by which the mind itself is moulded, and by which we judge all the deeds of the wise man to be beautiful, and therefore affirmed that God must be of the most perfect beauty, not merely for the purpose of confuting an antagonist, but with profound insight into the fact that nothing is more beautiful than truth itself, which is cognisable by the understanding alone, and is immut-

[1] The words of Cicero are: "Post, Anaximenes aera Deum statuit, eumque gigni, esseque immensum, et infinitum, et semper in motu: quasi aut aer sine ulla forma Deus esse possit, cum præsertim Deum non modo aliqua sed pulcherrima specie esse deceat; aut non omne quod ortum sit mortalitas consequatur." —*De Natura Deorum*, Book I.

able? Moreover, as to the opinion of Anaximenes, who held that the air is generated, and at the same time believed it to be God, it does not in the least move the man who understands that, since the air is certainly not God, there is no likeness between the manner in which the air is generated, that is to say, produced by some cause, and the manner, understood by none except through divine inspiration, in which He was begotten who is the Word of God, God with God. Moreover, who does not see that even in regard to material things he speaks most foolishly in affirming that air is generated, and is at the same time God, while he refuses to give the name of God to that by which the air has been generated,—for it is impossible that it could be generated by no power? Yet once more, his saying that the air is always in motion will have no disturbing influence as proof that the air is God upon the man who knows that all movements of body are of a lower order than movements of the soul, but that even the movements of the soul are infinitely slow compared with His who is supreme and immutable Wisdom.

24. In like manner, if Anaxagoras or any other affirm that the mind is essential truth and wisdom,[1] what call have I to debate with a man about a word? For it is manifest that mind gives being to the order and mode of all things, and that it may be suitably called infinite with respect not to its extension in space, but to its power, the range of which transcends all human thought. Nor [shall I dispute his assertion] that this essential wisdom is formless; for this is a property of material things, that whatever bodies are infinite are also formless. Cicero, however, from his desire to confute such opinions, as I suppose, in contending with adversaries who believed in nothing immaterial, denies that anything can be annexed to that which is infinite, because in things material there must be a boundary at the part to which anything is annexed. Therefore he says that Anaxagoras "did not see that motion joined to sensation and to it" (*i.e.* linked to it in unbroken connection) "is impossible in the infinite" (that is, in a substance which is infinite), as if treating of material substances, to which nothing can be joined except at their

[1] Ipsam veritatem atque sapientiam.

boundaries. Moreover, in the succeeding words—"and that sensation of which the whole system of nature is not sensible when struck is an impossibility"[1]—Cicero speaks as if Anaxagoras had said that mind—to which he ascribed the power of ordering and fashioning all things—had sensation such as the soul has by means of the body. For it is manifest that the whole soul has sensation when it feels anything by means of the body; for whatever is perceived by sensation is not concealed from the whole soul. Now, Cicero's design in saying that the whole system of nature must be conscious of every sensation was, that he might, as it were, take from the philosopher that mind which he affirms to be infinite. For how does the whole of nature experience sensation if it be infinite? Bodily sensation begins at some point, and does not pervade the whole of any substance unless it be one in which it can reach an end; but this, of course, cannot be said of that which is infinite. Anaxagoras, however, had not said anything about bodily sensation. The word "whole," moreover, is used differently when we speak of that which is immaterial, because it is understood to be without boundaries in space, so that it may be spoken of as a whole and at the same time as infinite —the former because of its completeness, the latter because of its not being limited by boundaries in space.

25. "Furthermore," says Cicero, "if he will affirm that the mind itself is, so to speak, some kind of animal, there must be some principle from within from which it receives the name 'animal,'"—so that mind, according to Anaxagoras, is a kind of body, and has within it an animating principle, because of which it is called "animal." Observe how he speaks in language which we are accustomed to apply to things corporeal,—animals being in the ordinary sense of the word visible substances,—adapting himself, as I suppose, to the blunted perceptions of those against whom he argues; and yet he has uttered a thing which, if they could awake to perceive it, might suffice to teach them that everything which presents itself to our minds as a living

[1] The words of Cicero are these: "Nec vidit neque motum sensui junctum et continentem in infinito ullum esse posse, neque sensum omnino quo non tota natura pulsa sentiret." Augustine, quoting probably from memory (see § 9), gives *infinito* as the dative of possession instead of *in infinito*.

body must be thought of not as itself a soul, but as an animal having a soul. For having said, "There must be something within from which it receives the name animal," he adds, "But what is deeper within than mind?" The mind, therefore, cannot have any inner soul, by possessing which it is an animal; for it is itself that which is innermost. If, then, it is an animal, let it have some external body in relation to which it may be within; for this is what he means by saying, "It is therefore girt round by an exterior body," as if Anaxagoras had said that mind cannot be otherwise than as belonging to some animal. And yet Anaxagoras held the opinion that essential supreme Wisdom is mind, although it is not the peculiar property of any living being, so to speak, since Truth is near to all souls alike that are able to enjoy it. Observe, therefore, how wittily he concludes the argument: "Since this is not the opinion of Anaxagoras" (*i.e.* seeing that he does not hold that that mind which he calls God is girt about with an external body, through its relation to which it could be an animal), "we must say that mind pure and simple, without the addition of anything" (*i.e.* of any body) "through which it may exercise sensation, seems to be beyond the range and conceptions of our intelligence."[1]

26. Nothing is more certain than that this lies beyond the range and conception of the intelligence of Stoics and Epicureans, who cannot think of anything which is not material. But by the word "our" intelligence he means "human" intelligence; and he very properly does not say, "it lies beyond our intelligence," but "it seems to lie beyond." For their opinion is, that this lies beyond the understanding of all men, and therefore they think that nothing of the kind can be. But there are some whose intelligence apprehends, in so far as this is given to man, the fact that there is pure and simple Wisdom and Truth, which is the peculiar property of no living being, but which imparts wisdom and truth to all souls alike which are susceptible of its influence. If Anaxagoras perceived the existence of this supreme Wisdom, and apprehended it to be God, and called it Mind, it is not by the mere name of this philosopher—with whom, on account of his place in the

[1] Cicero, *de Natura Deorum*, lib. I.

remote antiquity of erudition, all raw recruits in literature [1] (to adopt a military phrase) delight to boast an acquaintance—that we are made learned and wise; nor is it even by our having the knowledge through which he knew this truth. For truth ought to be dear to me not merely because it was not unknown to Anaxagoras, but because, even though none of these philosophers had known it, it is the truth.

27. If, therefore, it is unbecoming for us to be elated either by the knowledge of the man who peradventure apprehended the truth, by which knowledge we obtain, as it were, the appearance of learning, or even by the solid possession of the truth itself, whereby we obtain real acquisitions in learning, how much less can the names and tenets of those men who were in error assist us in Christian learning and in making known things obscure? For if we be men, it would be more fitting that we should grieve on account of the errors into which so many famous men fell, if we happen to hear of them, than that we should studiously investigate them, in order that, among men who are ignorant of them, we may enjoy the gratification of a most contemptible conceit of knowledge. For how much better would it be that I should never have heard the name of Democritus, than that I should now with sorrow ponder the fact that a man was highly esteemed in his own age who thought that the gods were images which emanated from solid bodies, but were not solid themselves; and that these, circling this way and that way by their independent motion, and gliding into the minds of men, make the divine power enter into the region of their thoughts, although, certainly, that body from which the image emanated may be rightly judged to surpass the image in excellence and proportion, as it surpasses it in solidity. Hence his opinion wavered, as they say, and oscillated, so that sometimes he said that the deity was some kind of nature from which images emanate, and which nevertheless can be thought of only by means of those images which he pours forth and sends out, that is, which from that nature (which he considered to be something material and eternal, and on this very account divine) were borne as by a kind of evaporation or continuous emanation,

[1] Litteriones ut militariter loquar.

and came and entered into our minds, so that we could form the thought of a god or gods. For these philosophers conceive of no cause of thought in our minds, except when images from those bodies which are the object of our thoughts come and enter into our minds; as if, forsooth, there were not many things, yea, more than we can number, which, without any material form, and yet intelligible, are apprehended by those who know how to apprehend such things. Take as an example essential Wisdom and Truth, of which if they can frame no idea, I wonder why they dispute concerning it at all; if, however, they do frame some idea of it in thought, I wish they would tell me either from what body the image of truth comes into their minds, or of what kind it is.

28. Democritus, however, is said to differ here also in his doctrine on physics from Epicurus; for he holds that there is in the concourse of atoms a certain vital and breathing power, by which power (I believe) he affirms that the images themselves (not all images of all things, but images of the gods) are endued with divine attributes, and that the first beginnings of the mind are in those universal elements to which he ascribed divinity, and that the images possess life, inasmuch as they are wont either to benefit or to hurt us. Epicurus, however, does not assume anything in the first beginnings of things but atoms, that is, certain corpuscles, so minute that they cannot be divided or perceived either by sight or by touch; and his doctrine is, that by the fortuitous concourse (clashing) of these atoms, existence is given both to innumerable worlds and to living things, and to the souls which animate them, and to the gods whom, in human form, he has located, not in any world, but outside of the worlds, and in the spaces which separate them; and he will not allow of any object of thought beyond things material. But in order to these becoming an object of thought, he says that from those things which he represents as formed of atoms, images more subtle than those which come to our eyes flow down and enter into the mind. For according to him, the cause of our seeing is to be found in certain images so huge that they embrace the whole outer world. But I suppose that you already understand their opinions regarding these images.

29. I wonder that Democritus was not convinced of the error of his philosophy even by this fact, that such huge images coming into our minds, which are so small (if being, as they affirm, material, the soul is confined within the body's dimensions), could not possibly, in the entirety of their size, come into contact with it. For when a small body is brought into contact with a large one, it cannot in any wise be touched at the same moment by all points of the larger. How, then, are these images at the same moment in their whole extent objects of thought, if they become objects of thought only in so far as, coming and entering into the mind, they touch it, seeing that they cannot in their whole extent either find entrance into so small a body or come in contact with so small a mind? Bear in mind, of course, that I am speaking now after their manner; for I do not hold the mind to be such as they affirm. It is true that Epicurus alone can be assailed with this argument, if Democritus holds that the mind is immaterial; but we may ask him in turn why he did not perceive that it is at once unnecessary and impossible for the mind, being immaterial, to think through the approach and contact of material images. Both philosophers alike are certainly confuted by the facts of vision; for images so great cannot possibly touch in their entirety eyes so small.

30. Moreover, when the question is put to them, how it comes that one image is seen of a body from which images emanate in countless multitudes, their answer is, that just because the images are emanating and passing in such multitudes, the effect produced by their being crowded and massed together is, that out of the many one is seen. The absurdity of this Cicero exposes by saying that their deity cannot be thought of as eternal, for this very reason, that he is thought of through images which are in countless multitudes flowing forth and passing away. And when they say that the forms of the gods are rendered eternal by the innumerable hosts of atoms supplying constant reinforcements, so that other corpuscles immediately take the place of those which depart from the divine substance, and by the same succession prevent the nature of the gods from being dissolved, Cicero replies, "On this ground all things would be eternal as well as the gods,"

since there is nothing which has not the same boundless store of atoms by which it may repair its perpetual decays. Again, he asks how their god could be otherwise than afraid of coming to destruction, seeing that he is without a moment's intermission beaten and shaken by an unceasing incursion of atoms,—beaten, inasmuch as he is struck by atoms rushing upon him, and shaken, inasmuch as he is penetrated by atoms rushing through him. Nay, more; seeing that from himself there emanate continually images (of which we have said enough), what good ground can he have for persuasion of his own immortality?[1]

31. As to all these ravings of the men who entertain such opinions, it is especially deplorable that the mere statement of them does not suffice to secure their rejection without any one controverting them in discussion; instead of which, the minds of men most gifted with acuteness have accepted the task of copiously refuting opinions which, as soon as they were enunciated, ought to have been rejected with contempt even by the slowest intellects. For even granting that there are atoms, and that these strike and shake each other by clashing together as chance may guide them, is it lawful for us to grant also that atoms thus meeting in fortuitous concourse can so make anything as to fashion its distinctive forms, determine its figure, polish its surface, enliven it with colour, or quicken it by imparting to it a spirit?—all which things every one sees to be accomplished in no other way than by the providence of God, if only he loves to see with the mind rather than with the eye alone, and asks this faculty of intelligent perception from the Author of his being. Nay, more; we are not at liberty even to grant the existence of atoms themselves, for, without discussing the subtle theories of the learned as to the divisibility of matter, observe how easily the absurdity of atoms may be proved from their own opinions. For they, as is well known, affirm that there is nothing else in nature but bodies and empty space, and the accidents of these, by which I believe that they mean motion and striking, and the forms which result from these. Let them tell us, then, under which category they reckon the

[1] Cicero, *de Natura Deorum*, lib. I.

images which they suppose to flow from the more solid bodies, but which, if indeed they are bodies, possess so little solidity that they are not discernible except by their contact with the eyes when we see them, and with the mind when we think of them. For the opinion of these philosophers is, that these images can proceed from the material object and come to the eyes or to the mind, which, nevertheless, they affirm to be material. Now, I ask, do these images flow from atoms themselves? If they do, how can these be atoms from which some bodily particles are in this process separated? If they do not, either something can be the object of thought without such images, which they vehemently deny, or we ask, whence have they acquired a knowledge of atoms, seeing that they can in nowise become objects of thought to us? But I blush to have even thus far refuted these opinions, although they did not blush to hold them. When, however, I consider that they have even dared to defend them, I blush not on their account, but for the race of mankind itself whose ears could tolerate such nonsense.

CHAP. v. 32. Wherefore, seeing that the minds of men are, through the pollution of sin and the lust of the flesh, so blinded that even these monstrous errors could waste in discussion concerning them the leisure of learned men, will you, Dioscorus, or will any man of an observant mind, hesitate to affirm that in no way could better provision have been made for the pursuit of truth by mankind than that a Man, assumed into ineffable and miraculous union by the Truth Himself, and being the manifestation of His Person on the earth, should by perfect teaching and divine acts move men to saving faith in that which could not as yet be intellectually apprehended? To the glory of Him who has done this we give our service; and we exhort you to believe immoveably and stedfastly in Him through whom it has come to pass that not a select few, but whole peoples, unable to discern these things by reason, do accept them in faith, until, upheld by instruction in saving truth, they escape from these perplexities into the atmosphere of perfectly pure and simple truth. It becomes us, moreover, to yield submission to His authority all the more unreservedly, when we see that in our day no error dares to lift up itself to

rally round it the uninstructed crowd without seeking the shelter of the Christian name, and that of all who, belonging to an earlier age, now remain outside of the Christian name, those alone continue to have in their obscure assemblies a considerable attendance who retain the Scriptures by which, however they may pretend not to see or understand it, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself was prophetically announced. Moreover, those who, though they are not within the Catholic unity and communion, boast of the name of Christians, are compelled to oppose them that believe, and presume to mislead the ignorant by a pretence of appealing to reason, since the Lord came with this remedy above all others, that he enjoined on the nations the duty of faith. But they are compelled, as I have said, to adopt this policy because they feel themselves most miserably overthrown if their authority is compared with the Catholic authority. They attempt, accordingly, to prevail against the firmly-settled authority of the immoveable Church by the name and the promises of a pretended appeal to reason. This kind of effrontery is, we may say, characteristic of all heretics. But He who is the most merciful Lord of faith has both secured the Church in the citadel of authority by most famous œcumenical Councils and the Apostolic sees themselves, and furnished her with the abundant armour of equally invincible reason by means of a few men of pious erudition and unfeigned spirituality. The perfection of method in training disciples is, that those who are weak be encouraged to the utmost to enter the citadel of authority, in order that when they have been safely placed there, the conflict necessary for their defence may be maintained with the most strenuous use of reason.

33. The Platonists, however, who, amidst the errors of false philosophies assailing them at that time on all sides, rather concealed their own doctrine to be searched for than brought it into the light to be vilified, as they had no divine personage to command faith, began to exhibit and unfold the doctrines of Plato after the name of Christ had become widely known to the wondering and troubled kingdoms of this world. Then flourished at Rome the school of Plotinus, which had as scholars many men of great acuteness and ability. But some

of them were corrupted by curious inquiries into magic, and others, recognising in the Lord Jesus Christ the impersonation of that essential and immutable Truth and Wisdom which they were endeavouring to reach, passed into His service. Thus the whole supremacy of authority and light of reason for regenerating and reforming the human race has been made to reside in the one saving Name, and in His one Church.

34. I do not at all regret that I have stated these things at great length in this letter, although perhaps you would have preferred that I had taken another course; for the more progress that you make in the truth, the more will you approve what I have written, and you will then approve of my counsel, though now you do not think it helpful to your studies. At the same time, I have, to the best of my ability, given answers to your questions,—to some of them in this letter, and to almost all the rest by brief annotations on the parchments on which you had sent them. If in these answers you think I have done too little, or done something else than you expected, you do not duly consider, my Dioscorus, to whom you addressed your questions. I have passed without reply all the questions concerning the orator and the books of Cicero *de Oratore*. I would have seemed to myself a contemptible trifler if I had entered on the exposition of these topics. For I might with propriety be questioned on all the other subjects, if any one desired me to handle and expound them, not in connection with the works of Cicero, but by themselves; but in these questions the subjects themselves are not in harmony with my profession now. I would not, however, have done all that I have done in this letter had I not removed from Hippo for a time after the illness under which I laboured when your messenger came to me. Even in these days I have been visited again with interruption of health and with fever, on which account there has been more delay than might otherwise have been in sending these to you. I earnestly beg you to write and let me know how you receive them.

LETTER CXXII.

(A.D. 410.)

TO HIS WELL-BELOVED BRETHREN THE CLERGY, AND TO THE WHOLE PEOPLE [OF HIPPO], AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. In the first place, I beseech you, my friends, and implore you, for Christ's sake, not to let my bodily absence grieve you. For I suppose you do not imagine that I could by any means be separated in spirit and in unfeigned love from you, although perchance it is even a greater grief to me than to you that my weakness unfits me for bearing all the cares which are laid on me by those members of Christ to whose service both fear of Him and love to them constrain me to devote myself. For you know this, my beloved, that I have never absented myself from you through self-indulgent taking of ease, but only when compelled by such duties as have made it necessary for some of my holy colleagues and brethren to endure, both on the sea and in countries beyond the sea, labours from which I was exempted, not because of reluctance of spirit, but by reason of imperfect bodily health. Wherefore, my dearly-beloved brethren, act so that, as the apostle says, "whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."[1] If any vexation pertaining to time causes you distress, this itself ought the more to remind you how you should occupy your thoughts with that life in which you may live without any burden, escaping not the annoying hardships of this short life, but the dread flames of eternal fire. For if ye strive with so much anxiety, so much earnestness, and so much labour, to save yourselves from falling into some transient sufferings in this world, how solicitous ought you to be to escape everlasting misery! And if the death which puts an end to the labours of time is so feared, how ought we to fear the death which ushers men into eternal pain! And if the short-lived and sordid pleasures of this world are so loved, with how much greater earnestness ought we to seek the pure and infinite joys of the world to come!

[1] Phil. i. 27.

Meditating upon these things, be not slothful in good works, that ye may come in due season to reap what you have sown.

2. It has been reported to me that you have forgotten your custom of providing raiment for the poor, to which work of charity I exhorted you when I was present with you; and I now exhort you not to allow yourselves to be overcome and made slothful by the tribulation of this world, which you see now visited with such calamities as were foretold by our Lord and Redeemer, who cannot lie. You ought in present circumstances not to be less diligent in works of charity, but rather to be more abundant in these than you were wont to be. For as men betake themselves in greater haste to a place of greater security when they see in the shaking of their walls the ruin of their house impending, so ought Christians, the more that they perceive, from the increasing frequency of their afflictions, that the destruction of this world is at hand, to be the more prompt and active in transferring to the treasury of heaven the goods which they were proposing to store up on earth, in order that, if any accident common to the lot of men occur, he may rejoice who has escaped from a dwelling doomed to ruin; and if, on the other hand, nothing of this kind happen, he may be exempt from painful solicitude who, die when he may, has committed his possessions to the keeping of the ever-living Lord, to whom he is about to go. Wherefore, my dearly-beloved brethren, let every one of you, according to his ability, of which he himself is the best judge, do with a portion of his substance as ye were wont to do; do it also with a more willing mind than ye were wont; and amid all the vexations of this life bear in your hearts the apostolic exhortation: "The Lord is at hand: be careful for nothing."[1] Let such things be reported to me concerning you as may make me understand that it is not through my presence with you, but from obedience to the precept of God, who is never absent, that you follow that good practice which for many years while I was with you, and for some time after my departure, you observed.

May the Lord preserve you in peace! And, dearly-beloved brethren, pray for us.

[1] Phil. iv. 5, 6.

LETTER CXXIII.

(A.D. 410.)

[FROM JEROME TO AUGUSTINE.]

THERE are many who go halting upon both feet, and refuse to bend their heads even when their necks are broken, persisting in adherence to their former errors, even though they have not their former liberty of proclaiming them.

Respectful salutations are sent to you by the holy brethren who are with your humble servant, and especially by your pious and venerable daughters.[1] I beg your Excellency to salute in my name your brethren my lord Alypius and my lord Evodius. Jerusalem is held captive by Nebuchadnezzar, and refuses to listen to the counsels of Jeremiah, preferring to look wistfully towards Egypt, that it may die in Tahpanhes, and perish there in eternal bondage.[2]

[1] Paula, Eustochium, and other recluses of Bethlehem.

[2] Two opinions have been advanced as to the signification of this enigmatical allusion to the events recorded in Jeremiah, chap. xliii. Some think that Jerome refers to Rome, then occupied by the Goths. Others find here a reference to the state of the Church at Jerusalem at the time; perhaps under the name of Nebuchadnezzar some heretical bishop is designed.

THIRD DIVISION.

LETTERS WHICH WERE WRITTEN BY AUGUSTINE AFTER THE TIME OF THE CONFERENCE WITH THE DONATISTS AND THE RISE OF THE PELAGIAN HERESY IN AFRICA—*i.e.* DURING THE LAST TWENTY YEARS OF HIS LIFE (A.D. 411–430).

LETTER CXXIV.

(A.D. 411.)

TO ALBINA, PINIANUS, AND MELANIA,[1] HONOURED IN THE LORD, BELOVED IN HOLINESS AND LONGED FOR IN BROTHERLY AFFECTION, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. I AM, whether through present infirmity or by natural temperament, very susceptible of cold; nevertheless, it would not be possible for me to suffer greater heat than I have done throughout this exceptionally dreadful winter, having been kept in a fever by distress because I have been unable, I do not say to hasten, but to fly to you (to visit whom it would have been fitting for me to fly across the seas), after you had been settled so near to me, and had come from so remote a land to see me. It may be, also, that you have supposed the rigorous weather of this winter to be the only cause of my suffering this disappointment; I pray you, beloved, give no place to this thought. For what inconvenience, hardship, or even

[1] The name Melania, though now almost as little known to the world at large as the fossil univalve molluscs to which palæontologists have assigned the designation, was in the time of Augustine highly esteemed throughout Christendom. The elder Melania, a lady of rank and affluence, left Rome when it was threatened by Alaric, and spent thirty-seven years in the East, returning to the city in 445 A.D. Her daughter-in-law, Albina, and her grand-daughter, the younger Melania (whose husband was the Pinianus mentioned here and in the two following letters), left Rome with her in 408 A.D., and after spending two years in Sicily, passed over into Africa, and fixed their residence at Thagaste, the native town of St. Augustine. A visit which they paid to him at Hippo was the occasion of the extraordinary proceedings referred to in Letters CXXV. and CXXVI.

danger, can these heavy rains bring, which I would not have encountered and endured in order to make my way to you, who are such comforters to us in our great calamities, and who, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, are lights kindled into vehement flame by the Supreme Light, raised aloft by lowliness of spirit, and deriving more glorious lustre from the glory which you have despised? Moreover, I would have enjoyed participation in the spiritual felicity vouchsafed to my earthly birthplace, in that it has been permitted to have you present, of whom when absent its citizens had heard much—so much, indeed, that although giving charitable credence to the report of what you were by nature and had become by grace, they feared, perchance, to repeat it to others, lest it should be disbelieved.

2. I shall therefore tell you the reason why I have not come, and the trials by which I have been kept back from so great a privilege, that I may obtain not only your forgiveness, but also, through your prayers, the mercy of Him who so works in you that ye live to Him. The congregation of Hippo, whom the Lord has ordained me to serve, is in great measure and almost wholly, of a constitution so infirm, that the pressure of even a comparatively light affliction might seriously endanger its well-being; at present, however, it is smitten with tribulation so overwhelming, that, even were it strong, it could scarcely survive the imposition of the burden. Moreover, when I returned to it recently, I found it offended to a most dangerous degree by my absence; and you, over whose spiritual strength we rejoice in the Lord, can with healthful taste relish and approve the saying of Paul: "Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?"[1] I feel this especially because there are many here who by disparaging us attempt to excite against us the minds of the others by whom we seem to be loved, in order that they may make room in them for the devil. But when those whose salvation is our care are angry with us, their strong determination to take vengeance on us is only an unreasonable desire for bringing death to themselves,—not the death of the body, but of the soul, in which the fact of death discovers itself mysteriously

[1] 2 Cor. xi. 29.

by the odour of corruption before it is possible for our care to foresee and provide against it.

Doubtless you will readily excuse this anxiety on my part, especially because, if you were displeased and wished to punish me, you could perhaps invent no severer pain than what I already suffer in not seeing you at Thagaste. I trust, however, that, assisted by your prayers, I may be permitted when the present hindrance has been removed with all speed to come to you, in whatsoever part of Africa you may be, if this town in which I labour is not worthy (and I do not presume to pronounce it worthy) to be along with us made joyful by your presence.

LETTER CXXV.

(A.D. 411.)

TO ALYPIUS, MY LORD MOST BLESSED AND BROTHER BELOVED WITH ALL REVERENCE, AND MY PARTNER IN THE PRIESTLY OFFICE, AND TO THE BRETHREN WHO ARE WITH HIM, AUGUSTINE AND THE BRETHREN WHO ARE WITH HIM SEND GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. We are deeply grieved, and can by no means regard it as a small matter, that the people of Hippo clamorously said so much to the disparagement of your Holiness; but, my good brother, their clamorous utterance of these things is not so great a cause for grief as the fact that we are, without open accusation, deemed guilty of similar things. For when we are believed to be actuated in retaining God's servants among us, not by love of righteousness, but by love of money, is it not to be desired that persons who believe this concerning us should with their voices avow what is hidden in their hearts, and so obtain, if possible, remedies great in proportion to the disease, rather than silently perish under the venom of these fatal suspicions? Wherefore it ought to be a greater care to us (and for this reason we conferred together before this happened) to provide how men to whom we are commanded to be examples in good works may be convinced that there is no ground for suspicions which they cherish, than to provide

how those may be rebuked who in words give definite utterance to their suspicions.

2. Wherefore I am not angry with the pious Albina, nor do I judge her to deserve rebuke; but I think she requires to be cured of such suspicions. It is true that she has not pointed at myself the words to which I refer, but has complained of the people of Hippo, as it were, alleging that their covetousness has been brought to light, and that in desiring to retain among them a man of wealth who was known to despise money, and to give it away freely, they were moved, not by his fitness for the office, but by regard to his ample means; nevertheless, she almost said openly that she had the same suspicion of myself, and not she only, but also her pious son-in-law and daughter, who, on that very day, said the same thing in the apse of the church.[1] In my opinion, it is more necessary that the suspicions of these persons should be removed than that their utterance of them should be rebuked. For where can immunity and rest from such thorns be provided and given to us, if they can sprout forth against us even in the hearts of intimate friends, so pious and so much beloved by us? It is by the ignorant multitude that such things have been thought concerning you, but I am the victim of similar suspicions from those who are the lights of the Church; you may see, therefore, which of us has the greater cause for grief. It seems to me that both cases call, not for invectives, but for remedial measures; for they are men, and their suspicions are of men, and therefore such things as they suspect, though they may be false, are not incredible. Persons such as these are of course not so foolish as to believe that the people are coveting their money, especially after their experience that the people of Thagaste obtained none of their money, from which it was certain that the people of Hippo would also obtain none. Nay, all the violence of this odium comes against the clergy alone, and especially against the bishops, whose authority is visibly pre-eminent, and who are supposed to use and enjoy as owners and lords the property of the Church. My dear Alypius, let not the weak be en-

[1] The "absis" was a chapel or recess in the choir, where the bishop was accustomed to stand surrounded by his clergy.

couraged through our example to cherish this pernicious and fatal covetousness. Call to mind what we said to each other before the occurrence of this temptation, which makes the duty all the more urgent. Let us rather by God's help endeavour to have this difficulty removed by friendly conference, and let us not count it sufficient to be guided by our own conscience alone; for this is not one of the cases in which its voice alone is sufficient for our direction. For if we be not unworthy servants of our God, if there live in us a spark of that charity which seeketh not her own, we are bound by all means to provide things honest, not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of men, lest while drinking untroubled waters in our own conscience, we be chargeable with treading with incautious feet, and so making the Lord's flock drink from a turbid stream.

3. For as to the proposal in your letter that we should discuss together the obligation of an oath which has been extorted by force, I beseech you, let not the method of our discussion involve in obscurity things which are perfectly clear. For if inevitable death were threatened in order to compel a servant of God to swear that he would do something forbidden by laws both human and divine, it would be his duty to prefer death to such an oath, lest he should be guilty of a crime in fulfilling his oath. But in this case, in which the determined clamour of the people, and only this, was forcing the man, not to a crime, but to that which if it were done would be lawfully done; when, moreover, there was indeed apprehension lest some reckless men, such as are mixed with a multitude even of good men, should through love of rioting break out into some wicked deeds of violence, if they found a pretext for disturbance and for plausibly justifiable indignation, but there was no certainty of this fear being realized,—who will affirm that it is lawful to commit a deliberate act of perjury in order to escape from uncertain consequences, involving, I shall not say loss or bodily injury, but even death itself? Regulus had not heard anything from the Holy Scriptures concerning the impiety of perjury, he had never heard of the flying roll of Zechariah,[1] and he confirmed

[1] Zech. v. 4. Augustine calls it "Zachariæ falx," translating, as the LXX. have done: δρέπανον.

his oath to the Carthaginians, not by the sacraments of Christ, but by the abominations of false gods; and yet in the face of inevitable tortures, and a death of unprecedented horror, he was not moved by fear so as to swear under constraint, but, because he had given his oath, he of his own free will submitted to these, lest he should be guilty of perjury. In that age, also, the Roman censors refused to inscribe in the roll, not of saints inheriting heavenly glory, but of senators received into the curia of Rome, not only men who, through fear of death and of cruel tortures, had chosen rather to commit manifest perjury than to return to merciless enemies, but also one who had believed himself clear of the guilt of perjury, because, after giving his oath, he had under the pretext of alleged necessity violated it by returning; in which we see that those who expelled him from the senate took into consideration, not what he himself had in his mind when he gave his oath, but what those to whom he pledged his word expected from him. Yet they had never read what we sing continually in the Psalm: "He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not."[1] We are wont to speak of these instances of virtue with the highest admiration, although they are found in men who were strangers to the grace and to the name of Christ; and yet do we seriously imagine that the question whether perjury is occasionally lawful is one for an answer to which we should search the divine books, in which, to prevent us from falling into this sin by inconsiderate oaths, this prohibition is written: "Swear not at all"?

4. I by no means dispute the perfect correctness of the maxim, that good faith requires an oath to be kept, not according to the mere words of him who gives it, but according to that which the person giving the oath knows to be the expectation of the person to whom he swears. For it is very difficult to define in words, especially in few words, the promise in regard to which security is exacted from him who gives his oath. They, therefore, are guilty of perjury, who, while adhering to the letter of their promise, disappoint the known expectation of those to whom their oath was given; and they are not guilty of perjury, who, even though departing

[1] Ps. xv. 4.

from the letter of the promise, fulfil that which was expected of them when they gave their oath. Wherefore, seeing that the people of Hippo desired to have the holy Pinianus, not as a prisoner who had forfeited liberty, but as a much-loved resident in their town, the limits of that which they expected from him, though it could not be adequately embraced in the words of his promise, are nevertheless so obvious that the fact of his being at this moment absent, after giving his oath to remain among them, does not disturb any one who may have heard that he was to leave this place for a definite purpose, and with the intention of returning. Accordingly, he will not be guilty of perjury, nor will he be regarded by them as violating his oath, unless he disappoint their expectation; and he will not disappoint their expectation, unless he either abandon his purpose of residing among them, or at some future time depart from them without intending to return. May God forbid that he should so depart from the holiness and fidelity which he owes to Christ and to the Church! For, not to speak of the dread judgment of God upon perjurers, which you know as well as myself, I am perfectly certain that henceforth we shall have no right to be displeased with any one who may refuse to believe what we attest by an oath, if we are found to think that perjury in such a man as Pinianus is to be not only tolerated without indignation, but actually defended. From this may we be saved by the mercy of Him who delivers from temptation those who put their trust in Him! Let Pinianus, therefore, as you have written in your communication, fulfil the promise by which he bound himself not to depart from Hippo, just as I myself and the other inhabitants of the town do not depart from it, having, of course, full freedom in going and returning at any time; the only difference being, that those who are not bound by any oath to reside here have it also in their power at any time, without being chargeable with perjury, to depart with no purpose of coming back again.

5. As to our clergy and the brethren settled in our monastery, I do not know that it can be proved that they either aided or abetted in the reproaches which were made against you. For when I inquired into this, I was informed that

only one from our monastery, a man of Carthage, had taken part in the clamour of the people; and this was not when they were uttering insults against you, but when they were demanding Pinianus as presbyter.

I have annexed to this letter a copy of the promise given by him, taken from the very paper which he subscribed and corrected under my own inspection.

LETTER CXXVI.

(A.D. 411.)

TO THE HOLY LADY AND VENERABLE HANDMAID OF GOD, ALBINA, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. As to the sorrow of your spirit, which you describe as inexpressible, it becomes me to assuage rather than to augment its bitterness, endeavouring if possible to remove your suspicions, instead of increasing the agitation of one so venerable and so devoted to God by giving vent to indignation because of that which I have suffered in this matter. Nothing was done to our holy brother, your son-in-law Pinianus, by the people of Hippo which might justly awaken in him the fear of death, although, perchance, he himself had such fears. Indeed, we also were apprehensive lest some of the reckless characters who are often secretly banded together for mischief in a crowd might break out into bold acts of violence, finding occasion for beginning a riot with some plausible pretext for passionate excitement. Nothing of this nature, however, was either spoken of or attempted by any one, as I have since had opportunity to ascertain; but against my brother Alypius the people did clamorously utter many opprobrious and unworthy reproaches, for which great sin I desire that they may obtain pardon in answer to his prayers. For my own part, after their outcries began, when I had told them how I was precluded by promise from ordaining him against his will, adding that, if they obtained him as their presbyter through my breaking my word, they could not retain me as their bishop, I left the multitude, and returned to my own seat.[1]

[1] Ad nostra subsellia.

Thereupon, they being made for a little while to pause and waver by my unexpected reply, like a flame driven back for a moment by the wind, began to be much more warmly excited, imagining that possibly a violation of my promise might be extorted from me, or that, in the event of my abiding by my promise, he might be ordained by another bishop. To all to whom I could address myself, namely, to the more venerable and aged men who had come up to me in the apse, I stated that I could not be moved to break my word, and that in the church committed to my care he could not be ordained by any other bishop except with my consent asked and obtained, in granting which I should be no less guilty of a breach of faith. I said, moreover, that if he were ordained against his own will, the people were only wishing him to depart from us as soon as he was ordained. They did not believe that this was possible. But the crowd having gathered in front of the steps, and persisting in the same determination with terrible and incessant clamour and shouting, made them irresolute and perplexed. At that time unworthy reproaches were loudly uttered against my brother Alypius; at that time, also, more serious consequences were apprehended by us.

2. But although I was much disturbed by so great a commotion among the people, and such trepidation among the office-bearers of the church, I did not say to that mob anything else than that I could not ordain him against his own will; nor after all that had passed was I influenced to do what I had also promised not to do, namely, to advise him in any way to accept the office of presbyter, which had I been able to persuade him to do, his ordination would have been with his consent. I remained faithful to both the promises which I had made,—not only to the one which I had shortly before intimated to the people, but also to the one in regard to which I was bound, so far as men were concerned, by only one witness. I was faithful, I say, not to an oath, but to my bare promise, even in the face of such danger. It is true that the fears of danger were, as we afterwards ascertained, without foundation; but whatever the danger might be, it was shared by us

all alike. The fear was also shared by all; and I myself had thoughts of retiring, being alarmed chiefly for the safety of the building in which we were assembled. But there was reason to apprehend that if I were absent some disaster might be more likely to occur, as the people would then be more exasperated by disappointment, and less restrained by reverential sentiments. Again, if I had gone through the dense mob along with Alypius, I had reason to fear lest some one should dare to lay violent hands on him; if, on the other hand, I had gone without him, what would have been the most natural opinion for men to have formed, if any accident had befallen Alypius, and I appeared to have deserted him in order to hand him over to the power of an infuriated people?

3. In the midst of this excitement and great distress, when, being at our wits' end, we could not, so to speak, take breath, behold our pious son Pinianus, suddenly and quite unexpectedly, sends to me a servant of God, to tell me that he wished to swear to the people, that if he were ordained against his will he would leave Africa altogether, thinking, I believe, that the people, knowing that of course he could not violate his oath, would not continue their outcry, seeing that by perseverance they could gain nothing, but only drive from among us a man whom we ought at least to retain as a neighbour, if he was to be no more. As it seemed to me, however, that it was to be feared that the vehemence of the people's grief would be increased by his taking an oath of this kind, I was silent in regard to it; and as he had by the same messenger begged me to come to him, I went without delay. When he had said to me again what he had stated by the messenger, he immediately added to the same oath what he had sent another messenger to intimate to me while I was hastening towards him, namely, that he would consent to reside in Hippo if no one compelled him to accept against his will the burden of the clerical office. On this, being comforted in my perplexities as by a breath of air when in danger of suffocation, I made no reply, but went with quickened pace to my brother Alypius, and told him what Pinianus had said. But he, being careful, I suppose, lest anything should be done with his sanction by which he thought you

might be offended, said, "Let no one ask my opinion on this subject." Having heard this, I hastened to the noisy crowd, and having obtained silence, declared to them what had been promised, along with the proffered guarantee of an oath. The people, however, having no other thought or desire than that he should be their presbyter, did not receive the proposal as I had expected they would, but, after talking in an under-tone among themselves, made the request that to this promise and oath a clause might be added, that if at any time he should be pleased to consent to accept the clerical office, he should do so in no other church than that of Hippo. I reported this to him: without hesitation he agreed to it. I returned to them with his answer; they were filled with joy, and presently demanded the promised oath.

4. I came back to your son-in-law, and found him at a loss as to the words in which his promise, confirmed by oath, could be expressed, because of various kinds of necessity which might emerge and might make it necessary for him to leave Hippo. He stated at the time what he feared, namely, that a hostile incursion of barbarians might occur, to avoid which it would be necessary to leave the place. The holy Melania wished to add also, as a possible reason for departure, the unhealthiness of the climate; but she was checked for this by his reply. I said, however, that he had brought forward an important reason deserving consideration, and one which, if it occurred, would compel the citizens themselves to abandon the place; but that, if this reason were stated to the people, we might justly fear lest they should regard us as prophesying evil, and, on the other hand, if a pretext for withdrawing from the promise were put under the general name of necessity, it might be thought that the necessity was only covering an intention to deceive. It seemed good to him, therefore, that we should test the feeling of the people in regard to this, and we found the result exactly as I had expected. For when the words which he had dictated were read by the deacon, and had been received with approbation, as soon as the clause concerning necessity which might hinder the fulfilment of his promise fell upon their ears, there arose at once a shout of remonstrance, and the promise was

rejected; and the tumult began to break out again, the people thinking that these negotiations had no other object than to deceive them. When our pious son saw this, he ordered the clause regarding necessity to be struck out, and the people recovered their cheerfulness once more.

5. I would gladly have excused myself on the ground of fatigue, but he would not go to the people unless I accompanied him; so we went together. He told them that he had himself dictated what they had heard from the deacon, that he had confirmed the promise by an oath, and would do the things promised, after which he forthwith rehearsed all in the words which he had dictated. The response of the people was, "Thanks be unto God!" and they begged that all which was written should be subscribed. We dismissed the catechumens, and he adhibited his signature to the document at once. Then we [Alypius and myself] began to be urged, not by the voices of the crowd, but by faithful men of good report as their representatives, that we also as bishops should subscribe the writing. But when I began to do this, the pious Melania protested against it. I wondered why she did this so late, as if we could make his promise and oath void by forbearing from appending our names to it; I obeyed, however, and so my signature remained incomplete, and no one thought it necessary to insist further upon our subscription.

6. I have been at pains to communicate to your Holiness, so far as I thought sufficient, what were the feelings, or rather the remarks, of the people on the following day, when they heard that he had left the town. Whoever, therefore, may have told you anything contradicting what I stated, is either intentionally or through his own mistake misleading you. For I am aware that I passed over some things which seemed to me irrelevant, but I know that I said nothing but the truth. It is therefore true that our holy son Pinianus took his oath in my presence and with my permission, but it is not true that he did it in obedience to any command from me. He himself knows this: it is also known to those servants of God whom he sent to me, the first being the pious Barnabas, the second Timasius, by whom also he sent

me the promise of his remaining in Hippo. As for the people themselves, moreover, they were urging him by their cries to accept the office of presbyter. They did not ask for his oath, but they did not refuse it when offered, because they hoped that if he remained amongst us, there might be produced in him a willingness to consent to ordination, while they feared lest, if ordained against his will, he should, according to his oath, leave Africa. And therefore they also were actuated in their clamorous procedure by regard to God's work (for surely the consecration of a presbyter is a work of God); and inasmuch as they did not feel satisfied with his promise of remaining in Hippo, unless it were also promised that, in the event of his at any time accepting the clerical office, he should do it nowhere else than among them, it is perfectly manifest what they hoped for from his dwelling among them, and that they did not abandon their zeal for the work of God.

7. On what ground, then, do you allege that the people did this out of a base desire for money? In the first place, the people who were so clamorous have nothing whatever of this kind to gain; for as the people of Thagaste derive from the gifts which you have bestowed on their church no profit but the joy of seeing your good work, it will be the same in the case of the people of Hippo, or of any other place in which you have obeyed or may yet obey the law of your Lord concerning the "mammon of unrighteousness." The people, therefore, in most vehemently insisting upon guiding the procedure of their church in regard to so great a man, did not ask from you a pecuniary advantage, but testified their admiration for your contempt of money. For if in my own case, because they had heard that, despising my patrimony, which consisted of only a few small fields, I had consecrated myself to the liberty of serving God, they loved this disinterestedness, and did not grudge this gift to the church of my birthplace, Thagaste, but, when it had not imposed upon me the clerical office, made me by force, so to speak, their own, how much more ardently might they love in our Pinianus his overcoming and treading under foot with such remarkable decision riches so great and hopes so bright, and a strong

natural capacity for enjoying this world! I indeed seem, in the opinion of many, who compare themselves with themselves, to have rather found than forsaken wealth. For my patrimony can scarcely be considered a twentieth part of the ecclesiastical property which I am now supposed to possess as master. But in whatever church, especially in Africa, our Pinianus might be ordained (I do not say a presbyter, but) a bishop, he would be still in deep poverty compared with his former affluence, even if he were using the church's revenues in the spirit of one lording it over God's heritage. Christian poverty is much more clearly and certainly loved in the case of one in whom there is no room for suspecting a desire for acquiring an accession to his wealth. It was this admiration which kindled the minds of the people, and roused them to such violence of persevering clamour. Let us therefore not charge them gratuitously with base covetousness, but rather, without imputing unworthy motives, allow them at least to love in others that good thing which they do not themselves possess. For although there may have mixed in the crowd some who are indigent or beggars, who helped to increase the clamour, and were actuated by the hope of some relief to their wants out of your honourable affluence, even this is not, in my opinion, base covetousness.

8. It remains, therefore, that the reproach of disgraceful covetousness must be levelled indirectly at the clergy, and especially at the bishop. For we are supposed to act as lords of the church's property; we are supposed to enjoy its revenues. In short, whatever money we have received for the church either is still in our possession or has been spent according to our judgment; and of it we have given nothing to any of the people besides the clergy and the brethren in the monastery, excepting only a very few indigent persons. I do not mean by this to say that the things which were said by you must necessarily have been said specially against us, but that, if said against any others than ourselves, they must have been incredible. What, then, shall we do? If it be not possible to clear ourselves before enemies, by what means may we at least clear ourselves before you? The matter is one pertaining to the soul; it is within us, hidden from the eyes of men, and

known to God alone. What, then, remains for us but to call to witness God, to whom it is known? When, therefore, you harbour these suspicions concerning us, you do not command but absolutely compel us to give our oath,—a much more grievous wrong than the commanding of an oath, which you have thought proper in your letter to censure as highly culpable in me; you compel us, I say, not by menacing death to the body, as the people of Hippo were supposed to have done, but by menacing death to our good name, which deserves to be regarded by us as more precious than life itself, for the sake of those weak brethren to whom we endeavour in all circumstances to exhibit ourselves as ensamples in good works.

9. We, however, are not indignant against you who compel us to this oath, as you are indignant against the people of Hippo. For you believe, as men judging of other men, things which, though not actually existing in us, might possibly have existed. Your suspicions we must labour not so much to reprove as to remove; and since our conscience is clear in the sight of God, we must seek to clear our character in your sight. It may be, as Alypius and I said to each other before this trial occurred, that God will grant that not only you, our much-beloved fellow-members of Christ's body, but even our most implacable enemies, may be thoroughly satisfied that we are not defiled by any love of money in our administration of ecclesiastical affairs. Until this be done (if the Lord, answering our prayer, permit it to be done), hear in the meantime what we are compelled to do, rather than put off for any length of time the healing of your heart. God is my witness that, as for the whole management of those ecclesiastical revenues over which we are supposed to love to exercise lordship, I only bear it as a burden which is imposed on me by love to the brethren and fear of God: I do not love it; nay, if I could, without unfaithfulness to my office, I would desire to be rid of it. God also is my witness that I believe the sentiments of Alypius to be the same as mine in this matter. Nevertheless, on the one hand, the people, and what is worse, the people of Hippo, have hastily done Alypius great wrong by entertaining another opinion of his character; and on the other hand, you who are saints of God and full of unfeigned

compassion have, through believing such things concerning us, thought proper to touch and admonish us while nominally censuring the same people of Hippo, who have no part whatever in the guilt of the alleged covetousness. You have desired unquestionably to correct us, and that without hating us (this be far from you!); wherefore I ought not to be angry with you, but to thank you, because it was not possible for you to have combined modesty and freedom more happily than when, instead of stating your sentiments as an offensive accusation against the bishop, you left them to be discovered by indirect inferences.

10. Let not the fact that I have thought it necessary thus to confirm my statements by oath cause you vexation by making you think that you are treated with harshness. There was no harshness or lack of kindly feeling in the apostle towards those to whom he wrote: "Neither used we at any time flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness."[1] In the thing which was open to men's observation he appealed to their own testimony, but in regard to that which was hidden, to whom could he appeal but to God? If, therefore, fear lest the ignorance of men should make them entertain some such thoughts concerning him was reasonably felt even by Paul, whose labours, as all men knew, were such that except in extreme necessity he never took anything for his own benefit from the communities to which he dispensed the grace of Christ, obtaining in all other cases the necessary provision for his support by working with his own hands, how much more pains must be taken to establish confidence in our disinterestedness by us, who are, both in the merit of holiness and in strength of mind, so far behind him, and who are not only unable to do anything by the work of our hands to support ourselves, but also precluded from this, even if we could work, by an accumulation of duties from which I believe that the apostles were exempt! Let the charge, therefore, of most base covetousness be brought no more in this matter against the Christian people—that is, the Church of Christ. For it is more tolerable that this charge be alleged against us, on whom the suspicion, though ground-

[1] 1 Thess. ii. 5.

less, might fall without being utterly improbable, than on the people, of whom it is certainly known that they could not either cherish the covetous desire or be reasonably suspected of entertaining it.

11. For persons possessing any faith—and how much more the Christian faith!—to be unfaithful to their oath, I do not say by doing something contrary to it, but by hesitating at all as to its fulfilment, is utterly wrong. What my judgment is on this question I have with sufficient fulness declared in the letter which I sent to my brother Alypius. Your Holiness wrote asking me "whether I or the people of Hippo consider any one under obligation to fulfil an oath which has been extorted by violence." But what is your own opinion? Do you think that even if death, which in this case was feared without reason, were certainly imminent, a Christian might use the name of his Lord to confirm a lie, and call his God to be witness to a falsehood? For assuredly a Christian, if urged by the menace of instant death to perjure himself by false testimony, ought to fear the loss of honour more than the loss of life. Hostile armies confront each other in the battlefield with mutual menaces of death, about which there can be no uncertainty; and yet, when they pledge themselves to each other by oath, we praise those who are faithful to their engagement, and we justly abhor those who are unfaithful. Now what was the motive leading them to swear to each other, but the fear on both sides of being killed or taken prisoners? And by this promise even such men hold themselves bound, lest they be guilty of sacrilege and perjury if they did not fulfil the oath extorted by the fear of death or captivity, and broke the promise given in such circumstances: they are more afraid of breaking their oath than of taking a man's life. And do we propose to discuss as a debateable question whether an oath must be fulfilled which has been given under fear of harm by servants of God, who are under pre-eminent obligations to holiness, by monks who are running the race towards Christian perfection, by distributing their property according to Christ's command?

12. Tell me, I beseech you, what hardship deserving the name of exile, or transportation, or banishment, is involved

in his promise to reside here? I suppose that the office of presbyter is not exile. Would our Pinianus prefer exile to that office? Far be it from us to find such apology for one who is a saint of God and very dear to us: God forbid, I say, that it should be said of him that he preferred exile to the office of presbyter, and preferred to perjure himself rather than submit to exile. This I would say even if it were true that the oath by which he promised to reside among us had been extorted from him; but the fact is that, instead of being extorted in spite of his refusal, it was accepted when he had proffered it himself. It was accepted, moreover, as I have already said, because of the hope, which was encouraged by his remaining here, that he might also consent to comply with our desire that he should accept the clerical office. In fine, whatever opinion may be entertained concerning us or concerning the people of Hippo, the case of those who may have compelled him to take the oath is very different from that of those who may have—I do not say compelled, but at least—counselled him to break the oath. I trust, also, that Pinianus himself will not refuse to consider seriously whether it is worse to swear under the pressure of fear, however great, or, in the absence of all alarm, to commit deliberate perjury.

13. God be thanked that the men of Hippo regard his promise of residence here as kept fully, if only he come with the intention of making this town his home, and in going whithersoever necessity may call him, go with the intention of coming back to us again. For if they were to exact literal fulfilment of the words of the promise, it would be the duty of a servant of God to adhere to every sentence of it rather than forswear himself. But as it would be a crime for them so to bind any one, much more such a man as he is, so they have themselves proved that they had no such unreasonable expectation; for on hearing that he had gone away with the intention of returning, they expressed their satisfaction; and fidelity to an oath requires no more than the performance of what was expected by those to whom it was given. Let me ask, moreover, what is meant by saying that he, in giving the oath with his own lips, mentioned the possibility of necessity preventing his fulfilment of the promise? The truth is, that

with his own lips he ordered the qualifying clause to be removed. If he put it in, it would be when he himself spoke to the people; but if he had done so, they assuredly would not have answered, "Thanks be unto God," but would have renewed the protestations which they made when it was read with the qualifying clause by the deacon. And what difference does it really make whether this plea of necessity for departing from the promise was or was not inserted? Nothing more than we have stated above was expected from him; but he who disappoints the known expectation of those to whom his oath is given, cannot but be a perjured person.

14. Wherefore, let his promise be fulfilled, and let the hearts of the weak be healed, lest, on the one hand, those who approve of it be taught by such a conspicuous example to imitate an act of perjury, and lest, on the other hand, those who condemn it have just grounds for saying that none of us is worthy to be believed, not only when we make promises, but even when we give our oath. Let us especially guard against giving occasion in this to the tongues of enemies, which are used by the great Enemy as darts wherewith to slay the weak. But God forbid that we should expect from a man like Pinianus anything else than what the fear of God inspires, and the superior excellence of his own piety approves. As for myself, whom you blame for not interfering to forbid his oath, I admit that I could not bring myself to believe that, in circumstances so disorderly and scandalous, I ought rather to allow the church which I serve to be overthrown, than accept the deliverance which was offered to us by such a man.

LETTER CXXX.

(A.D. 412.)

TO PROBA,[1] A DEVOTED HANDMAID OF GOD, BISHOP AUGUSTINE, A SERVANT OF CHRIST AND OF CHRIST'S SERVANTS, SENDS GREETING IN THE NAME OF THE LORD OF LORDS.

CHAP. I. 1. Recollecting your request and my promise, that as soon as time and opportunity should be given by Him to

[1] Anicia Faltonia Proba, the widow of Sextus Petronius Probus, belonged to

whom we pray, I would write you something on the subject of prayer to God, I feel it my duty now to discharge this debt, and in the love of Christ to minister to the satisfaction of your pious desire. I cannot express in words how greatly I rejoiced because of the request, in which I perceived how great is your solicitude about this supremely important matter. For what could be more suitably the business of your widowhood than to continue in supplications night and day, according to the apostle's admonition, "She that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications night and day"?[1] It might, indeed, appear wonderful that solicitude about prayer should occupy your heart and claim the first place in it, when you are, so far as this world is concerned, noble and wealthy, and the mother of such an illustrious family, and, although a widow, not desolate, were it not that you wisely understand that in this world and in this life the soul has no sure portion.

2. Wherefore He who inspired you with this thought is assuredly doing what He promised to His disciples when they were grieved, not for themselves, but for the whole human family, and were despairing of the salvation of any one, after they heard from Him that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. He gave them this marvellous and

a Roman family of great wealth and noble lineage. Three of her sons held the consulship, two of them together in 395 A.D., and the third in 406 A.D. When Rome was taken by Alaric in 410, Proba and her family were in the city, and narrowly escaped from violence during the six days in which the Goths pillaged the city. About this time one of the sons of Proba died, and very soon after this sad event she resolved to quit Rome, as the return of Alaric was daily apprehended. Having realized her ample fortune, she sailed to Africa, accompanied by her daughter-in-law Juliana (the widow of Anicus Hermogenianus Olybrius), and the daughter of Juliana, Demetrias, the well known *religieuse*, whose taking of the veil in 413 produced so profound an impression throughout the ecclesiastical world. A considerable retinue of widows and younger women, seeking protection under her escort, accompanied the distinguished refugee to Carthage. After paying a large sum to secure the protection of Heraclianus, Count of Africa, she was permitted to establish herself with her community of pious women in Carthage. Her piety led her to seek the friendship and counsel of Augustine. How readily it was given is seen here, and in Letters CXXXI., CL., and CLXXXVIII.

[1] 1 Tim. v. 5.

merciful reply: "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."[1] He, therefore, with whom it is possible to make even the rich enter into the kingdom of heaven, inspired you with that devout anxiety which makes you think it necessary to ask my counsel on the question how you ought to pray. For while He was yet on earth, He brought Zaccheus,[2] though rich, into the kingdom of heaven, and, after being glorified in His resurrection and ascension, He made many who were rich to despise this present world, and made them more truly rich by extinguishing their desire for riches through His imparting to them His Holy Spirit. For how could you desire so much to pray to God if you did not trust in Him? And how could you trust in Him if you were fixing your trust in uncertain riches, and neglecting the wholesome exhortation of the apostle: "Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation, that they may lay hold on eternal life"?[3]

CHAP. II. 3. It becomes you, therefore, out of love to this true life, to account yourself "desolate" in this world, however great the prosperity of your lot may be. For as that is the true life, in comparison with which the present life, which is much loved, is not worthy to be called life, however happy and prolonged it be, so is it also the true consolation promised by the Lord in the words of Isaiah, "I will give him the true consolation, peace upon peace,"[4] without which consolation men find themselves, in the midst of every mere earthly solace, rather desolate than comforted. For as for riches and high rank, and all other things in which men who are strangers to true felicity imagine that happiness exists, what comfort do they bring, seeing that it is better to be independent of such things than to enjoy abundance of them, because, when possessed, they occasion, through our fear of losing them, more vexation than was caused by the strength

[1] Matt. xix. 21–26.
[2] Luke xix. 9.
[3] 1 Tim. vi. 17–19.
[4] Isa. lvii. 18, 19, in LXX. version.

of desire with which their possession was coveted? Men are not made good by possessing these so-called good things, but, if men have become good otherwise, they make these things to be really good by using them well. Therefore true comfort is to be found not in them, but rather in those things in which true life is found. For a man can be made blessed only by the same power by which he is made good.

4. It is true, indeed, that good men are seen to be the sources of no small comfort to others in this world. For if we be harassed by poverty, or saddened by bereavement, or disquieted by bodily pain, or pining in exile, or vexed by any kind of calamity, let good men visit us,—men who can not only rejoice with them that rejoice, but also weep with them that weep,[1] and who know how to give profitable counsel, and win us to express our feelings in conversation: the effect is, that rough things become smooth, heavy burdens are lightened, and difficulties vanquished most wonderfully. But this is done in and through them by Him who has made them good by His Spirit. On the other hand, although riches may abound, and no bereavement befal us, and health of body be enjoyed, and we live in our own country in peace and safety, if, at the same time, we have as our neighbours wicked men, among whom there is not one who can be trusted, not one from whom we do not apprehend and experience treachery, deceit, outbursts of anger, dissensions, and snares,—in such a case are not all these other things made bitter and vexatious, so that nothing sweet or pleasant is left in them? Whatever, therefore, be our circumstances in this world, there is nothing truly enjoyable without a friend. But how rarely is one found in this life about whose spirit and behaviour as a true friend there may be perfect confidence! For no one is known to another so intimately as he is known to himself, and yet no one is so well known even to himself that he can be sure as to his own conduct on the morrow; wherefore, although many are known by their fruits, and some gladden their neighbours by their good lives, while others grieve their neighbours by their evil lives, yet the minds of men are so unknown and so unstable, that there is the highest wisdom in

[1] Rom. xii. 15.

the exhortation of the apostle: "Judge nothing before the time until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God."[1]

5. In the darkness, then, of this world, in which we are pilgrims absent from the Lord as long as "we walk by faith and not by sight,"[2] the Christian soul ought to feel itself desolate, and continue in prayer, and learn to fix the eye of faith on the word of the divine sacred Scriptures, as "on a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in our hearts."[3] For the ineffable source from which this lamp borrows its light is the Light which shineth in darkness, but the darkness comprehendeth it not—the Light, in order to seeing which our hearts must be purified by faith; for "blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;"[4] and "we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."[5] Then after death shall come the true life, and after desolation the true consolation, that life shall deliver our "souls from death"—that consolation shall deliver our "eyes from tears," and, as follows in the psalm, our feet shall be delivered from falling; for there shall be no temptation there.[6] Moreover, if there be no temptation, there will be no prayer; for there we shall not be waiting for promised blessings, but contemplating the blessings actually bestowed; wherefore he adds, "I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living,"[7] where we shall then be—not in the wilderness of the dead, where we now are: "For ye are dead," says the apostle, "and your life is hid with Christ in God; when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."[8] For that is the true life on which the rich are exhorted to lay hold by being rich in good works; and in it is the true consolation, for want of which, meanwhile, a widow is "desolate"

[1] 1 Cor. iv. 5.
[2] 2 Cor. v. 6, 7.
[3] 2 Pet. i. 19.
[4] Matt. v. 8.
[5] 1 John iii. 2.
[6] Ps. cxvi. 8.
[7] Ps. cxvi. 9. In the LXX., εὐαρεστήσω; in Aug., "placebo."
[8] Col. iii. 3, 4.

indeed, even though she has sons and grandchildren, and conducts her household piously, entreating all dear to her to put their hope in God: and in the midst of all this, she says in her prayer, "My soul thirsteth for Thee; my flesh longeth in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;"[1] and this dying life is nothing else than such a land, however numerous our mortal comforts, however pleasant our companions in the pilgrimage, and however great the abundance of our possessions. You know how uncertain all these things are; and even if they were not uncertain, what would they be in comparison with the felicity which is promised in the life to come!

6. In saying these things to you, who, being a widow, rich and noble, and the mother of an illustrious family, have asked from me a discourse on prayer, my aim has been to make you feel that, even while your family are spared to you, and live as you would desire, you are desolate so long as you have not attained to that life in which is the true and abiding consolation, in which shall be fulfilled what is spoken in prophecy: "We are satisfied in the morning with Thy mercy, we rejoice and are glad all our days; we are made glad according to the days wherein Thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil."[2]

CHAP. III. 7. Wherefore, until that consolation come, remember, in order to your "continuing in prayers and supplications night and day," that, however great the temporal prosperity may be which flows around you, you are desolate. For the apostle does not ascribe this gift to every widow, but to her who, being a widow indeed, and desolate, "trusteth in God, and continueth in supplication night and day." Observe, however, most vigilantly the warning which follows: "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth;"[3] for a person lives in those things which he loves, which he greatly desires, and in which he believes himself to be blessed. Wherefore, what Scripture has said of riches: "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them,"[4] I say to you concerning pleasures: "If pleasures increase, set not your

[1] Ps. lxiii. 1.
[2] Ps. xc. 14, 15, version of LXX.
[3] 1 Tim. v. 5, 6.
[4] Ps. lxii. 10.

heart upon them." Do not, therefore, think highly of yourself because these things are not wanting, but are yours abundantly, flowing, as it were, from a most copious fountain of earthly felicity. By all means look upon your possession of these things with indifference and contempt, and seek nothing from them beyond health of body. For this is a blessing not to be despised, because of its being necessary to the work of life until "this mortal shall have put on immortality"[1]—in other words, the true, perfect, and everlasting health, which is neither reduced by earthly infirmities nor repaired by corruptible gratification, but, enduring with celestial vigour, is animated with a life eternally incorruptible. For the apostle himself says, "Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof,"[2] because we must take care of the flesh, but only in so far as is necessary for health; "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh,"[3] as he himself likewise says. Hence, also, he admonished Timothy, who was, as it appears, too severe upon his body, that he should "use a little wine for his stomach's sake, and for his often infirmities."[4]

8. Many holy men and women, using every precaution against those pleasures in which she that liveth, cleaving to them, and dwelling in them as her heart's delight, is dead while she liveth, have cast from them that which is as it were the mother of pleasures, by distributing their wealth among the poor, and so have stored it in the safer keeping of the treasury of heaven. If you are *hindered* from doing this by some consideration of duty to your family, you know yourself what account you can give to God of your use of riches. For no one knoweth what passeth within a man, "but the spirit of the man which is in him."[5] We ought not to judge anything "before the time until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall every man have praise of God."[6] It pertains, therefore, to your care as a widow, to see to it that if pleasures increase you do not set your heart upon them, lest that which ought to rise that it may live, die through contact with their corrupting

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 54. [2] Rom. xiii. 14. [3] Eph. v. 29.
[4] 1 Tim. v. 23. [5] 1 Cor. ii. 11. [6] 1 Cor. iv. 5.

influence. Reckon yourself to be one of those of whom it is written, "Their hearts shall live for ever."[1]

CHAP. IV. 9. You have now heard what manner of person you should be if you would pray; hear, in the next place, what you ought to pray for. This is the subject on which you have thought it most necessary to ask my opinion, because you were disturbed by the words of the apostle: "We know not what we should pray for as we ought;"[2] and you became alarmed lest it should do you more harm to pray otherwise than you ought, than to desist from praying altogether. A short solution of your difficulty may be given thus: "Pray for a happy life." This all men wish to have; for even those whose lives are worst and most abandoned would by no means live thus, unless they thought that in this way they either were made or might be made truly happy. Now what else ought we to pray for than that which both bad and good desire, but which only the good obtain?

CHAP. V. 10. You ask, perchance, What is this happy life? On this question the talents and leisure of many philosophers have been wasted, who, nevertheless, failed in their researches after it just in proportion as they failed to honour Him from whom it proceeds, and were unthankful to Him. In the first place, then, consider whether we should accept the opinion of those philosophers who pronounce that man happy who lives according to his own will. Far be it, surely, from us to believe this; for what if a man's will inclines him to live in wickedness? Is he not proved to be a miserable man in proportion to the facility with which his depraved will is carried out? Even philosophers who were strangers to the worship of God have rejected this sentiment with deserved abhorrence. One of them, a man of the greatest eloquence, says: "Behold, however, others, not philosophers indeed, but men of ready power in disputation, who affirm that all men are happy who live according to their own will. But this is certainly untrue, for to wish that which is unbecoming is itself a most miserable thing; nor is it so miserable a thing to fail in obtaining what you wish as to wish to obtain what you ought not to desire."[3] What is your opinion? Are not

[1] Ps. xxii. 26. [2] Rom. viii. 26. [3] Cicero Hortensius.

these words, by whomsoever they are spoken, derived from the Truth itself? We may therefore here say what the apostle said of a certain Cretan poet[1] whose sentiment had pleased him: "This witness is true."[2]

11. He, therefore, is truly happy who has all that he wishes to have, and wishes to have nothing which he ought not to wish. This being understood, let us now observe what things men may without impropriety wish to have. One desires marriage; another, having become a widower, chooses thereafter to live a life of continence; a third chooses to practise continence though he is married. And although of these three conditions one may be found better than another, we cannot say that any one of the three persons is wishing what he ought not: the same is true of the desire for children as the fruit of marriage, and for life and health to be enjoyed by the children who have been received,—of which desires the latter is one with which widows remaining unmarried are for the most part occupied; for although, refusing a second marriage, they do not now wish to have children, they wish that the children that they have may live in health. From all such care those who preserve their virginity intact are free. Nevertheless, all have some dear to them whose temporal welfare they do without impropriety desire. But when men have obtained this health for themselves, and for those whom they love, are we at liberty to say that they are now happy? They have, it is true, something which it is quite becoming to desire; but if they have not other things which are greater, better, and more full both of utility and beauty, they are still far short of possessing a happy life.

CHAP. VI. 12. Shall we then say, that in addition to this health of body men may desire for themselves and for those dear to them honour and power? By all means, if they desire these in order that by obtaining them they may promote the interest of those who may be their dependants. If they seek these things not for the sake of the things themselves, but for some good thing which may through this means be accomplished, the wish is a proper one; but if it be merely for the empty gratification of pride and arrogance,

[1] Epimenides. [2] Titus i. 13.

and for a superfluous and pernicious triumph of vanity, the wish is improper. Wherefore, men do nothing wrong in desiring for themselves and for their kindred the competent portion of necessary things, of which the apostle speaks when he says: "Godliness with a competency [contentment in English version] is great gain; for we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out: and having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition; for the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."[1] This competent portion he desires without impropriety who desires it and nothing beyond it; for if his desires go beyond it, he is not desiring it, and therefore his desire is improper. This was desired, and was prayed for by him who said: "Give me neither poverty nor riches: feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full, and deny Thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain."[2] You see assuredly that this competency is desired not for its own sake, but to secure the health of the body, and such provision of house and clothing as is befitting the man's circumstances, that he may appear as he ought to do among those amongst whom he has to live, so as to retain their respect and discharge the duties of his position.

13. Among all these things, our own welfare and the benefits which friendship bids us ask for others are things to be desired on their own account; but a competency of the necessaries of life is usually sought, if it be sought in the proper way, not on its own account, but for the sake of the two higher benefits. Welfare consists in the possession of life itself, and health and soundness of mind and body. The claims of friendship, moreover, are not to be confined within *too* narrow range, for it embraces all to whom love and kindly affection are due, although the heart goes out to some of these more freely, to others more cautiously; yea, it even extends to

[1] 1 Tim. vi. 6–10. [2] Prov. xxx. 8, 9.

our enemies, for whom also we are commanded to pray. There is accordingly no one in the whole human family to whom kindly affection is not due by reason of the bond of a common humanity, although it may not be due on the ground of reciprocal love; Chap. vii.—but in those by whom we are requited with a holy and pure love, we find great and reasonable pleasure.

For these things, therefore, it becomes us to pray: if we have them, that we may keep them; if we have them not, that we may get them.

14. Is this all? Are these the benefits in which exclusively the happy life is found? Or does truth teach us that something else is to be preferred to them all? We know that both the competency of things necessary, and the well-being of ourselves and of our friends, so long as these concern this present world alone, are to be cast aside as dross in comparison with the obtaining of eternal life; for although the body may be in health, the mind cannot be regarded as sound which does not prefer eternal to temporal things; yea, the life which we live in time is wasted, if it be not spent in obtaining that by which we may be worthy of eternal life. Therefore all things which are the objects of useful and becoming desire are unquestionably to be viewed with reference to that one life which is lived with God, and is derived from Him. In so doing, we love ourselves if we love God; and we truly love our neighbours as ourselves, according to the second great commandment, if, so far as is in our power, we persuade them to a similar love of God. We love God, therefore, for what He is in Himself, and ourselves and our neighbours for His sake. Even when living thus, let us not think that we are securely established in that happy life, as if there was nothing more for which we should still pray. For how could we be said to live a happy life now, while that which alone is the object of a well-directed life is still wanting to us?

CHAP. VIII. 15. Why, then, are our desires scattered over many things, and why, through fear of not praying as we ought, do we ask what we should pray for, and not rather say with the Psalmist: "One thing have I desired of the Lord,

that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple"?[1] For in the house of the Lord "all the days of life" are not days distinguished by their successively coming and passing away: the beginning of one day is not the end of another; but they are all alike unending in that place where the life which is made up of them has itself no end. In order to our obtaining this true blessed life, He who is Himself the True Blessed Life has taught us to pray, not with much speaking, as if our being heard depended upon the fluency with which we express ourselves, seeing that we are praying to One who, as the Lord tells us, "knoweth what things we have need of before we ask Him."[2] Whence it may seem surprising that, although He has forbidden "much speaking," He who knoweth before we ask Him what things we need has nevertheless given us exhortation to prayer in such words as these: "Men ought always to pray and not to faint;" setting before us the case of a widow, who, desiring to have justice done to her against her adversary, did by her persevering entreaties persuade an unjust judge to listen to her, not moved by a regard either to justice or to mercy, but overcome by her wearisome importunity; in order that we might be admonished how much more certainly the Lord God, who is merciful and just, gives ear to us praying continually to Him, when this widow, by her unremitting supplication, prevailed over the indifference of an unjust and wicked judge, and how willingly and benignantly He fulfils the good desires of those whom He knows to have forgiven others their trespasses, when this suppliant, though seeking vengeance upon her adversary, obtained her desire.[3] A similar lesson the Lord gives in the parable of the man to whom a friend in his journey had come, and who, having nothing to set before him, desired to borrow from another friend three loaves (in which, perhaps, there is a figure of the Trinity of persons of one substance), and finding him already along with his household asleep, succeeded by very urgent and importunate entreaties in rousing him up, so that he gave him as many as he needed, being moved rather

[1] Ps. xxvii. 4. [2] Matt. vi. 7, 8. [3] Luke xviii. 1–8.

by a wish to avoid further annoyance than by benevolent thoughts: from which the Lord would have us understand, that if even one who was asleep is constrained to give, even in spite of himself, after being disturbed in his sleep by the person who asks of him, how much more kindly will He give who never sleeps, and who rouses us from sleep that we may ask from Him.[1]

16. With the same design He added: "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask Him?"[2] We have here what corresponds to those three things which the apostle commends: *faith* is signified by the fish, either on account of the element of water used in baptism, or because it remains unharmed amid the tempestuous waves of this world,—contrasted with which is the serpent, that with poisonous deceit persuaded man to disbelieve God; *hope* is signified by the egg, because the life of the young bird is not yet in it, but is to be—is not seen, but hoped for, because "hope which is seen is not hope,"[3]—contrasted with which is the scorpion, for the man who hopes for eternal life forgets the things which are behind, and reaches forth to the things which are before, for to him it is dangerous to look back; but the scorpion is to be guarded against on account of what it has in its tail, namely, a sharp and venomous sting; *charity* is signified by bread, for "the greatest of these is charity," and bread surpasses all other kinds of food in usefulness,—contrasted with which is a stone, because hard hearts refuse to exercise charity. Whether this be the meaning of these symbols, or some other more suitable be found, it is at least certain that He who knoweth how to give good gifts to His children urges us to "ask and seek and knock."

[1] Luke xi. 5–8. [2] Luke xi. 9–13, and Matt. vii. 7–11. [3] Rom. viii. 24.

17. Why this should be done by Him who "before we ask Him knoweth what things we have need of," might perplex our minds, if we did not understand that the Lord our God requires us to ask not that thereby our wish may be intimated to Him, for to Him it cannot be unknown, but in order that by prayer there may be exercised in us by supplications that desire by which we may receive what He prepares to bestow. His gifts are very great, but we are small and straitened in our capacity of receiving. Wherefore it is said to us: "Be ye enlarged, not bearing the yoke along with unbelievers."[1] For, in proportion to the simplicity of our faith, the firmness of our hope, and the ardour of our desire, will we more largely receive of that which is immensely great; which "eye hath not seen," for it is not colour; which "the ear hath not heard," for it is not sound; and which hath not ascended into the heart of man, for the heart of man must ascend to it.[2]

CHAP. IX. 18. When we cherish uninterrupted desire along with the exercise of faith and hope and charity, we "pray always." But at certain stated hours and seasons we also use words in prayer to God, that by these signs of things we may admonish ourselves, and may acquaint ourselves with the measure of progress which we have made in this desire, and may more warmly excite ourselves to obtain an increase of its strength. For the effect following upon prayer will be excellent in proportion to the fervour of the desire which precedes its utterance. And therefore, what else is intended by the words of the apostle: "Pray without ceasing,"[3] than, "Desire without intermission, from Him who alone can give it, a happy life, which no life can be but that which is eternal"? This, therefore, let us desire continually from the Lord our God; and thus let us pray continually. But at certain hours we recall our minds from other cares and business, in which desire itself somehow is cooled down, to the business of prayer, admonishing ourselves by the words of our prayer to fix attention upon that which we desire, lest what had begun to lose heat become altogether cold, and be finally extinguished, if the flame be not more

[1] 2 Cor. vi. 13, 14. [2] 1 Cor. ii. 9. [3] 1 Thess. v. 17.

frequently fanned. Whence, also, when the same apostle says, "Let your requests be made known unto God,"[1] this is not to be understood as if thereby they become known to God, who certainly knew them before they were uttered, but in this sense, that they are to be made known to ourselves in the presence of God by patient waiting upon Him, not in the presence of men by ostentatious worship. Or perhaps that they may be made known also to the angels that are in the presence of God, that these beings may in some way present them to God, and consult Him concerning them, and may bring to us, either manifestly or secretly, that which, hearkening to His commandment, they may have learned to be His will, and which must be fulfilled by them according to that which they have there learned to be their duty; for the angel said to Tobias:[2] "Now, therefore, when thou didst pray, and Sara thy daughter-in-law, I did bring the remembrance of your prayers before the Holy One."

CHAP. X. 19. Wherefore it is neither wrong nor unprofitable to spend much time in praying, if there be leisure for this without hindering other good and necessary works to which duty calls us, although even in the doing of these, as I have said, we ought by cherishing holy desire to pray without ceasing. For to spend a long time in prayer is not, as some think, the same thing as to pray "with much speaking." Multiplied words are one thing, long-continued warmth of desire is another. For even of the Lord Himself it is written, that He continued all night in prayer,[3] and that His prayer was more prolonged when He was in an agony;[4] and in this is not an example given to us by Him who is in time an Intercessor such as we need, and who is with the Father eternally the Hearer of prayer?

20. The brethren in Egypt are reported to have very frequent prayers, but these very brief, and, as it were, sudden and ejaculatory, lest the wakeful and aroused attention which is indispensable in prayer should by protracted exercises vanish or lose its keenness. And in this they themselves show plainly enough, that just as this attention is not to be

[1] Phil. iv. 6. [2] Tobias xii. 12. [3] Luke vi. 12.
[4] Luke xxii. 43. English version, "more earnestly."

allowed to become exhausted if it cannot continue long, so it is not to be suddenly suspended if it is sustained. Far be it from us either to use "much speaking" in prayer, or to refrain from prolonged prayer, if fervent attention of the soul continue. To use much speaking in prayer is to employ a superfluity of words in asking a necessary thing; but to prolong prayer is to have the heart throbbing with continued pious emotion towards Him to whom we pray. For in most cases prayer consists more in groaning than in speaking, in tears rather than in words. But He setteth our tears in His sight, and our groaning is not hidden from Him who made all things by the word, and does not need human words.

CHAP. XI. 21. To us, therefore, words are necessary, that by them we may be assisted in considering and observing what we ask, not as means by which we expect that God is to be either informed or moved to compliance. When, therefore, we say: "Hallowed be Thy name," we admonish ourselves to desire that His name, which is always holy, may be also among men esteemed holy, that is to say, not despised; which is an advantage not to God, but to men. When we say: "Thy kingdom come," which shall certainly come whether we wish it or not, we do by these words stir up our own desires for that kingdom, that it may come to us, and that we may be found worthy to reign in it. When we say: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," we pray for ourselves that He would give us the grace of obedience, that His will may be done by us in the same way as it is done in heavenly places by His angels. When we say: "Give us this day our daily bread," the word "this day" signifies for the present time, in which we ask either for that competency of temporal blessings which I have spoken of before ("bread" being used to designate the whole of those blessings, because of its constituting so important a part of them), or the sacrament of believers, which is in this present time necessary, but necessary in order to obtain the felicity not of the present time, but of eternity. When we say: "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," we remind ourselves both what we should ask, and what we should do in order that we may be worthy to receive what we ask. When we say: "Lead

us not into temptation," we admonish ourselves to seek that we may not, through being deprived of God's help, be either ensnared to consent or compelled to yield to temptation. When we say: "Deliver us from evil," we admonish ourselves to consider that we are not yet enjoying that good estate in which we shall experience no evil. And this petition, which stands last in the Lord's Prayer, is so comprehensive that a Christian, in whatsoever affliction he be placed, may in using it give utterance to his groans and find vent for his tears—may begin with this petition, go on with it, and with it conclude his prayer. For it was necessary that by the use of these words the things which they signify should be kept before our memory.

CHAP. XII. 22. For whatever other words we may say,—whether the desire of the person praying go before the words, and employ them in order to give definite form to its requests, or come after them, and concentrate attention upon them, that it may increase in fervour,—if we pray rightly, and as becomes our wants, we say nothing but what is already contained in the Lord's Prayer. And whoever says in prayer anything which cannot find its place in that gospel prayer, is praying in a way which, if it be not unlawful, is at least not spiritual; and I know not how carnal prayers can be lawful, since it becomes those who are born again by the Spirit to pray in no other way than spiritually. For example, when one prays: "Be Thou glorified among all nations as Thou art glorified among us," and "Let Thy prophets be found faithful," [1] what else does he ask than, "Hallowed be Thy name"? When one says: "Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts, cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved," [2] what else is he saying than, "Let Thy kingdom come"? When one says: "Order my steps in Thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me," [3] what else is he saying than, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"? When one says: "Give me neither poverty nor riches," [4] what else is this than, "Give us this day our daily bread"? When one says: "Lord, remember David, and all his com-

[1] Ecclus. xxxvi. 4, 18.
[2] Ps. lxxx. 7, 19.
[3] Ps. cxix. 133.
[4] Prov. xxx. 8.

passion,"[1] or, "O Lord, if I have done this, if there be iniquity in my hands, if I have rewarded evil to them that did evil to me,"[2] what else is this than, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors"? When one says: "Take away from me the lusts of the appetite, and let not sensual desire take hold on me,"[3] what else is this than, "Lead us not into temptation"? When one says: "Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God; defend me from them that rise up against me,"[4] what else is this than, "Deliver us from evil"? And if you go over all the words of holy prayers, you will, I believe, find nothing which cannot be comprised and summed up in the petitions of the Lord's Prayer. Wherefore, in praying, we are free to use different words to any extent, but we must ask the same things; in this we have no choice.

23. These things it is our duty to ask without hesitation for ourselves and for our friends, and for strangers—yea, even for enemies; although in the heart of the person praying, desire for one and for another may arise, differing in nature or in strength according to the more immediate or more remote relationship. But he who says in prayer such words as, "O Lord, multiply my riches;" or, "Give me as much wealth as Thou hast given to this or that man;" or, "Increase my honours, make me eminent for power and fame in this world," or something else of this sort, and who asks merely from a desire for these things, and not in order through them to benefit men agreeably to God's will, I do not think that he will find any part of the Lord's Prayer in connection with which he could fit in these requests. Wherefore let us be ashamed at least to ask these things, if we be not ashamed to desire them. If, however, we are ashamed of even desiring them, but feel ourselves overcome by the desire, how much better would it be to ask to be freed from this plague of desire by Him to whom we say, "Deliver us from evil"!

CHAP. XIII. 24. You have now, if I am not mistaken, an answer to two questions,—what kind of person you ought to be if you would pray, and what things you should ask in prayer; and the answer has been given not by my teaching,

[1] Ps. cxxxii. 1 (LXX.). [2] Ps. vii. 3, 4. [3] Ecclus. xxiii. 6. [4] Ps. lix. 1.

but by His who has condescended to teach us all. A happy life is to be sought after, and this is to be asked from the Lord God. Many different answers have been given by many in discussing wherein true happiness consists; but why should we go to many teachers, or consider many answers to this question? It has been briefly and truly stated in the divine Scriptures, "Blessed is the people whose God is the Lord."[1] That we may be numbered among this people, and that we may attain to beholding Him and dwelling for ever with Him, "the end of the commandment is, charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."[2] In the same three, hope has been placed instead of a good conscience. Faith, hope, and charity, therefore, lead unto God the man who prays, *i.e.* who believes, hopes, and desires, and is guided as to what he should ask from the Lord by studying the Lord's Prayer. Fasting, and abstinence from gratifying carnal desire in other pleasures without injury to health, and especially frequent almsgiving, are a great assistance in prayer; so that we may be able to say, "In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord, with my hands in the night before Him, and I was not deceived."[3] For how can God, who is a Spirit, and who cannot be touched, be sought with hands in any other sense than by good works?

CHAP. XIV. 25. Perhaps you may still ask why the apostle said, "We know not what to pray for as we ought,"[4] for it is wholly incredible that either he or those to whom he wrote were ignorant of the Lord's Prayer. He could not say this either rashly or falsely; what, then, do we suppose to be his reason for the statement? Is it not that vexations and troubles in this world are for the most part profitable either to heal the swelling of pride, or to prove and exercise patience, for which, after such probation and discipline, a greater reward is reserved, or to punish and eradicate some sins; but we, not knowing what beneficial purpose these may serve, desire to be freed from all tribulation? To this ignorance the apostle showed that even he himself was not a stranger (unless, perhaps, he did it notwithstanding his knowing what to pray for

[1] Ps. cxliv. 15.
[2] 1 Tim. i. 5.
[3] Ps. lxxvii. 2 (LXX.).
[4] Rom. viii. 26.

as he ought), when, lest he should be exalted above measure by the greatness of the revelations, there was given unto him a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him; for which thing, not knowing surely what he ought to pray for, he besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from him. At length he received the answer of God, declaring why that which so great a man prayed for was denied, and why it was expedient that it should not be done: "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness."[1]

26. Accordingly, we know not what to pray for as we ought in regard to tribulations, which may do us good or harm; and yet, because they are hard and painful, and against the natural feelings of our weak nature, we pray, with a desire which is common to mankind, that they may be removed from us. But we ought to exercise such submission to the will of the Lord our God, that if He does not remove those vexations, we do not suppose ourselves to be neglected by Him, but rather, in patient endurance of evil, hope to be made partakers of greater good, for so His strength is perfected in our weakness. God has sometimes in anger granted the request of impatient petitioners, as in mercy He denied it to the apostle. For we read what the Israelites asked, and in what manner they asked and obtained their request; but while their desire was granted, their impatience was severely corrected.[2] Again, He gave them, in answer to their request, a king according to their heart, as it is written, not according to His own heart.[3] He granted also what the devil asked, namely, that His servant, who was to be proved, might be tempted.[4] He granted also the request of unclean spirits, when they besought Him that their legion might be sent into the great herd of swine.[5] These things are written to prevent any one from thinking too highly of himself if he has received an answer when he was urgently asking anything which it would be more advantageous for him not to receive, or to prevent him from being cast down and despairing of the divine compassion towards himself if he be not heard, when,

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 7–9. [2] Numb. xi. [3] 1 Sam. viii. 6, 7.
[4] Job i. 12, ii. 6. [5] Luke viii. 32.

perchance, he is asking something by the obtaining of which he might be more grievously afflicted, or might be by the corrupting influences of prosperity wholly destroyed. In regard to such things, therefore, we know not what to pray for as we ought. Accordingly, if anything is ordered in a way contrary to our prayer, we ought, patiently bearing the disappointment, and in everything giving thanks to God, to entertain no doubt whatever that it was right that the will of God and not our will should be done. For of this the Mediator has given us an example, inasmuch as, after He had said, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me," transforming the human will which was in Him through His incarnation, He immediately added, "Nevertheless, O Father, not as I will but as Thou wilt."[1] Wherefore, not without reason are many made righteous by the obedience of One.[2]

27. But whoever desires from the Lord that "one thing," and seeks after it,[3] asks in certainty and in confidence, and has no fear lest when obtained it be injurious to him, seeing that, without it, anything else which he may have obtained by asking in a right way is of no advantage to him. The thing referred to is the one true and only happy life, in which, immortal and incorruptible in body and spirit, we may contemplate the joy of the Lord for ever. All other things are desired, and are without impropriety prayed for, with a view to this one thing. For whosoever has it shall have all that he wishes, and cannot possibly wish to have anything along with it which would be unbecoming. For in it is the fountain of life, which we must now thirst for in prayer so long as we live in hope, not yet seeing that which we hope for, trusting under the shadow of His wings before whom are all our desires, that we may be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of His house, and made to drink of the river of His pleasures; because with Him is the fountain of life, and in His light we shall see light,[4] when our desire shall be satisfied with good things, and when there shall be nothing beyond to be sought after with groaning, but all things shall be possessed by us with rejoicing. At the same time, because this blessing is nothing else than the "peace which passeth all

[1] Matt. xxvi. 39. [2] Rom. v. 19. [3] Ps. xxvii. 4 [4] Ps. xxxvi. 8–10.

understanding,"[1] even when we are asking it in our prayers, we know not what to pray for as we ought. For inasmuch as we cannot present it to our minds as it really is, we do not know it, but whatever image of it may be presented to our minds we reject, disown, and condemn; we know it is not what we are seeking, although we do not yet know enough to be able to define what we seek.

CHAP. XV. 28. There is therefore in us a certain learned ignorance, so to speak—an ignorance which we learn from that Spirit of God who helps our infirmities. For after the apostle said, "If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it," he added in the same passage, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is in the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."[2] This is not to be understood as if it meant that the Holy Spirit of God, who is in the Trinity, God unchangeable, and is one God with the Father and the Son, intercedes for the saints like one who is not a divine person; for it is said, "He maketh intercession for the saints," because He enables the saints to make intercession, as in another place it is said, "The Lord your God proveth you, that He may know whether ye love Him,"[3] *i. e.* that He may make you know. He therefore makes the saints intercede with groanings which cannot be uttered, when He inspires them with longings for that great blessing, as yet unknown, for which we patiently wait. For how is that which is desired set forth in language if it be unknown, for if it were utterly unknown it would not be desired; and on the other hand, if it were seen, it would not be desired nor sought for with groanings?

CHAP. XVI. 29. Considering all these things, and whatever else the Lord shall have made known to you in this matter, which either does not occur to me or would take too much time to state here, strive in prayer to overcome this world: pray in hope, pray in faith, pray in love, pray earnestly and

[1] Phil. iv. 7. [2] Rom. viii. 25–27. [3] Deut. xii. 3.

patiently, pray as a widow belonging to Christ. For although prayer is, as He has taught, the duty of all His members, *i. e.* of all who believe in Him and are united to His body, a more assiduous attention to prayer is found to be specially enjoined in Scripture upon those who are widows. Two women of the name of Anna are honourably named there,—the one, Elkanah's wife, who was the mother of holy Samuel; the other, the widow who recognised the Most Holy One when He was yet a babe. The former, though married, prayed with sorrow of mind and brokenness of heart because she had no sons; and she obtained Samuel, and dedicated him to the Lord, because she vowed to do so when she prayed for him.[1] It is not easy, however, to find to what petition of the Lord's Prayer her petition could be referred, unless it be to the last, "Deliver us from evil," because it was esteemed to be an evil to be married and not to have offspring as the fruit of marriage. Observe, however, what is written concerning the other Anna, the widow: she "departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day."[2] In like manner, the apostle said in words already quoted, "She that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day;"[3] and the Lord, when exhorting men to pray always and not to faint, made mention of a widow, who, by persevering importunity, persuaded a judge to attend to her cause, though he was an unjust and wicked man, and one who neither feared God nor regarded man. How incumbent it is on widows to go beyond others in devoting time to prayer may be plainly enough seen from the fact that from among them are taken the examples set forth as an exhortation to all to earnestness in prayer.

30. Now what makes this work specially suitable to widows but their bereaved and desolate condition? Whosoever, then, understands that he is in this world bereaved and desolate as long as he is a pilgrim absent from his Lord, is careful to commit his widowhood, so to speak, to his God as his shield in continual and most fervent prayer. Pray, therefore, as a widow of Christ, not yet seeing Him whose help you im-

[1] 1 Sam. i. [2] Luke ii. 36, 37. [3] 1 Tim. v. 5.

plore. And though you are very wealthy, pray as a poor person, for you have not yet the true riches of the world to come, in which you have no loss to fear. Though you have sons and grandchildren, and a large household, still pray, as I said already, as one who is desolate, for we have no certainty in regard to all temporal blessings that they shall abide for our consolation even to the end of this present life. If you seek and relish the things that are above, you desire things everlasting and sure; and as long as you do not yet possess them, you ought to regard yourself as desolate, even though all your family are spared to you, and live as you desire. And if you thus act, assuredly your example will be followed by your most devout daughter-in-law,[1] and the other holy widows and virgins that are settled in peace under your care; for the more pious the manner in which you order your house, the more are you bound to persevere fervently in prayer, not engaging yourselves with the affairs of this world further than is demanded in the interests of religion.

31. By all means remember to pray earnestly for me. I would not have you yield such deference to the office fraught with perils which I bear, as to refrain from giving the assistance which I know myself to need. Prayer was made by the household of Christ for Peter and for Paul. I rejoice that you are in His household; and I need, incomparably more than Peter and Paul did, the help of the prayers of the brethren. Emulate each other in prayer with a holy rivalry, with one heart, for you wrestle not against each other, but against the devil, who is the common enemy of all the saints. "By fasting, by vigils, and all mortification of the body, prayer is greatly helped."[2] Let each one do what she can; what one cannot herself do, she does by another who can do it, if she loves in another that which personal inability alone hinders her from doing; wherefore let her who can do less not keep back the one who can do more, and let her who can do more not urge unduly her who can do less. For your conscience is responsible to God; to each other owe nothing but mutual love. May the Lord, who is able to do above what we ask or think, give ear to your prayers.[3]

[1] Juliana, the mother of Demetrias. [2] Tobit xii. 8. [3] Eph. iii. 20.

LETTER CXXXI.

(A.D. 412.)

TO HIS MOST EXCELLENT DAUGHTER, THE NOBLE AND DESERVEDLY ILLUSTRIOUS LADY PROBA, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

You speak the truth when you say that the soul, having its abode in a corruptible body, is restrained by this measure of contact with the earth, and is somehow so bent and crushed by this burden that its desires and thoughts go more easily downwards to many things than upwards to one. For Holy Scripture says the same: "The corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things."[1] But our Saviour, who by His healing word raised up the woman in the gospel that had been eighteen years bowed down[2] (whose case was, perchance, a figure of spiritual infirmity), came for this purpose, that Christians might not hear in vain the call, "Lift up your hearts," and might truly reply, "We lift them up to the Lord." Looking to this, you do well to regard the evils of this world as easy to bear because of the hope of the world to come. For thus, by being rightly used, these evils become a blessing, because, while they do not increase our desires for this world, they exercise our patience; as to which the apostle says, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God:"[3] *all* things, he saith—not only, therefore, those which are desired because pleasant, but also those which are shunned because painful; since we receive the former without being carried away by them, and bear the latter without being crushed by them, and in all give thanks, according to the divine command, to Him of whom we say, "I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth,"[4] and, "It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me, that I might learn Thy statutes."[5] The truth is, most noble lady, that if the calm of this treacherous prosperity were always smiling upon us, the soul of man

[1] Wisd. ix. 15. [2] Luke xiii. 11–13. [3] Rom. viii. 28.
[4] Ps. xxxiv. 1. [5] Ps. cxix. 71 (LXX.).

would never make for the haven of true and certain safety. Wherefore, in returning the respectful salutation due to your Excellency, and expressing my gratitude for your most pious care for my welfare, I ask of the Lord that He may grant to you the rewards of the life to come, and consolation in the present life; and I commend myself to the love and prayers of all of you in whose hearts Christ dwells by faith.

(*In another hand.*) May the true and faithful God truly comfort your heart and preserve your health, my most excellent daughter and noble lady, deservedly illustrious.

LETTER CXXXII.

(A.D. 412.)

TO VOLUSIANUS, MY NOBLE LORD AND MOST JUSTLY DISTINGUISHED SON, BISHOP AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

In my desire for your welfare, both in this world and in Christ, I am perhaps not even surpassed by the prayers of your pious mother. Wherefore, in reciprocating your salutation with the respect due to your worth, I beg to exhort you, as earnestly as I can, not to grudge to devote attention to the study of the Writings which are truly and unquestionably holy. For they are genuine and solid truth, not winning their way to the mind by artificial eloquence, nor giving forth with flattering voice a vain and uncertain sound. They deeply interest the man who is hungering not for words but for things; and they cause great alarm at first in him whom they are to render safe from fear. I exhort you especially to read the writings of the apostles, for from them you will receive a stimulus to acquaint yourself with the prophets, whose testimonies the apostles use. If in your reading or meditation on what you have read any question arises to the solution of which I may appear necessary, write to me, that I may write in reply. For, with the Lord helping me, I may perhaps be more able to serve you in this way than by personally conversing with you on such subjects, partly because, through the difference in our occupations, it does not happen that you have leisure at the same times as I might

have it, but especially because of the irrepressible intrusion of those who are for the most part not adapted to such discussions, and take more pleasure in a war of words than in the clear light of knowledge ; whereas, whatever is written stands always at the service of the reader when he has leisure, and there can be nothing burdensome in the society of that which is taken up or laid aside at your own pleasure.

LETTER CXXXIII.

(A.D. 412.)

TO MARCELLINUS,[1] MY NOBLE LORD, JUSTLY DISTINGUISHED, MY SON VERY MUCH BELOVED, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. I HAVE learned that the Circumcellions and clergy of the Donatist faction belonging to the district of Hippo, whom the guardians of public order had brought to trial for their deeds, have been examined by your Excellency, and that the most of them have confessed their share in the violent death which the presbyter Restitutus suffered at their hands, and in the beating of Innocentius, another Catholic presbyter, as well as in digging out the eye and cutting off the finger of the said Innocentius. This news has plunged me into the deepest anxiety, lest perchance your Excellency should judge them worthy, according to the laws, of punishment not less severe than suffering in their own persons the same injuries as they had inflicted on others. Wherefore I write this letter to implore you by your faith in Christ, and by the mercy of

[1] Marcellinus was commissioned by the Emperor Honorius to convene a conference of Catholic and Donatist bishops, with a view to the final peaceful settlement of their differences. He accordingly summoned both parties to a conference, held in the summer of 411, in which he pronounced the Catholic party to have completely gained their cause in argument. He proceeded to carry out with considerable rigour the laws passed for the repression of the Donatist schism, and thus becoming obnoxious to that faction, fell at length a victim to their revenge when a turn of fortune favoured their plots against his life. The honour of a place among the martyrs of the early Church has been assigned to him. His character may be learned from Letters CXXXVI., CXXXVIII., CXXXIX., and CXLIII., and particularly from the beautiful tribute to his worth given in Letter CLI., in which the circumstances of his death are recorded.

Christ the Lord Himself, by no means to do this or permit it to be done. For although we might silently pass over the execution of criminals who may be regarded as brought up for trial not upon an accusation of ours, but by an indictment presented by those to whose vigilance the preservation of the public peace is entrusted, we do not wish to have the sufferings of the servants of God avenged by the infliction of precisely similar injuries in the way of retaliation. Not, of course, that we object to the removal from these wicked men of the liberty to perpetrate further crimes; but our desire is rather that justice be satisfied without the taking of their lives or the maiming of their bodies in any part, and that, by such coercive measures as may be in accordance with the laws, they be turned from their insane frenzy to the quietness of men in their sound judgment, or compelled to give up mischievous violence and betake themselves to some useful labour. This is indeed called a penal sentence; but who does not see that when a restraint is put upon the boldness of savage violence, and the remedies fitted to produce repentance are not withdrawn, this discipline should be called a benefit rather than vindictive punishment?

2. Fulfil, Christian judge, the duty of an affectionate father; let your indignation against their crimes be tempered by considerations of humanity; be not provoked by the atrocity of their sinful deeds to gratify the passion of revenge, but rather be moved by the wounds which these deeds have inflicted on their own souls to exercise a desire to heal them. Do not lose now that fatherly care which you maintained when prosecuting the examination, in doing which you extracted the confession of such horrid crimes, not by stretching them on the rack, not by furrowing their flesh with iron claws,[1] not by scorching them with flames, but by beating them with rods,—a mode of correction used by schoolmasters,[2] and by parents themselves in chastising children, and often also by bishops in the sentences awarded by them. Do not,

[1] Compare "ungulis sulcantibus latera." *Codex Justin*, ix. 18. 7.

[2] Magistris artium liberalium; doubtless the name of Master of Arts was originally connected with the office and work of teaching, instead of being a mere honorary title.

therefore, now punish with extreme severity the crimes which you searched out with lenity. The necessity for harshness is greater in the investigation than in the infliction of punishment; for even the gentlest men use diligence and stringency in searching out a hidden crime, that they may find to whom they may show mercy. Wherefore it is generally necessary to use more rigour in making inquisition, so that when the crime has been brought to light, there may be scope for displaying clemency. For all good works love to be set in the light, not in order to obtain glory from men, but, as the Lord saith, "that they seeing your good works may glorify your Father who is in heaven."[1] And, for the same reason, the apostle was not satisfied with merely exhorting us to practise moderation, but also commands us to make it known: "Let your moderation," he says, "be known unto all men;"[2] and in another place, "Showing all meekness unto all men."[3] Hence, also, that most signal forbearance of the holy David, when he mercifully spared his enemy when delivered into his hand,[4] would not have been so conspicuous had not his power to act otherwise been manifest. Therefore let not the power of executing vengeance inspire you with harshness, seeing that the necessity of examining the criminals did not make you lay aside your clemency. Do not call for the executioner now when the crime has been found out, after having forborne from calling in the tormentor when you were finding it out.

3. In fine, you have been sent hither for the benefit of the Church. I solemnly declare that what I recommend is expedient in the interests of the Catholic Church, or, that I may not seem to pass beyond the boundaries of my own charge, I protest that it is for the good of the Church belonging to the diocese of Hippo. If you do not hearken to me asking this favour as a friend, hearken to me offering this counsel as a bishop; although, indeed, it would not be presumption for me to say—since I am addressing a Christian, and especially in such a case as this—that it becomes you to hearken to me as a bishop commanding with authority, my noble and justly distinguished lord and much-loved son. I am aware that the

[1] Matt. v. 16. [2] Phil. iv. 5. [3] Titus iii. 2. [4] 1 Sam. xxiv. 7.

principal charge of law cases connected with the affairs of the Church has been devolved on your Excellency, but as I believe that this particular case belongs to the very illustrious and honourable proconsul, I have written a letter[1] to him also, which I beg you not to refuse to give to him, or, if necessary, recommend to his attention; and I entreat you both not to resent our intercession, or counsel, or anxiety, as officious. And let not the sufferings of Catholic servants of God, which ought to be useful in the spiritual upbuilding of the weak, be sullied by the retaliation of injuries on those who did them wrong, but rather, tempering the rigour of justice, let it be your care as sons of the Church to commend both your own faith and your Mother's clemency.

May almighty God enrich your Excellency with all good things, my noble and justly distinguished lord and dearly beloved son!

LETTER CXXXV.

(A.D. 412.)

TO BISHOP AUGUSTINE, MY LORD TRULY HOLY, AND FATHER JUSTLY REVERED, VOLUSIANUS SENDS GREETING.

1. O MAN who art a pattern of goodness and uprightness, you ask me to apply to you for instruction in regard to some of the obscure passages which occur in my reading. I accept at your command the favour of this kindness, and willingly offer myself to be taught by you, acknowledging the authority of the ancient proverb, "We are never too old to learn." With good reason the author of this proverb has not restricted by any limits or end our pursuit of wisdom; for truth,[2] secluded in its original principles, is never so disclosed to those who approach it as to be wholly revealed to their knowledge. It seems to me, therefore, my lord truly holy, and father justly revered, worth while to communicate to you the substance of a conversation which recently took place

[1] This letter, No. CXXXIV., is addressed to Apringius, and in somewhat similar terms, but at greater length, urges the same request.

[2] We read here "veritas," instead of "virtus."

among us. I was present at a gathering of friends, and a great many opinions were brought forward there, such as the disposition and studies of each suggested. Our discourse was chiefly, however, on the department of rhetoric which treats of proper arrangement.[1] I speak to one familiar with the subject, for you were not long ago a teacher of these things. Upon this followed a discussion regarding "invention" in rhetoric, its nature, what boldness it requires, how great the labour involved in methodical arrangement, what is the charm of metaphors, and the beauty of illustrations, and the power of applying epithets suitable to the character and nature of the subject in hand. Others extolled with partiality the poet's art. This part also of eloquence is not left unnoticed or unhonoured by you. We may appropriately apply to you that line of the poet: "The ivy is intertwined with the laurels which reward your victory."[2] We spoke, accordingly, of the embellishments which skilful arrangement adds to a poem, of the beauty of metaphors, and of the sublimity of well-chosen comparisons; then we spoke of smooth and flowing versification, and, if I may use the expression, the harmonious variation of the pauses in the lines.[3] The conversation turned next to a subject with which you are very familiar, namely, that philosophy which you were wont yourself to cherish, after the manner of Aristotle and Isocrates. We asked what had been achieved by the philosopher of the Lyceum, by the varied and incessant doubtings of the Academy, by the debater of the Porch, by the discoveries of natural philosophers, by the self-indulgence of the Epicureans; and what had been the result of their boundless zeal in disputation with each other, and how truth was more than ever unknown by them after they assumed that its knowledge was attainable.

2. While our conversation continues on these topics, one of the large company says: "Who among us is so thoroughly acquainted with the wisdom taught by Christianity as to be able to resolve the doubts by which I am entangled, and to

[1] "Partitio," defined thus by Quintilian, vii. 1: "Sit igitur *divisio* rerum plurium in singulas—*partitio*, singularum in partes discretas ordo et recta quædam locatio."

[2] Virgil, *Bucol.* Ecl. 8, line 13.

[3] Cæsurarum modulata variatio.

give firmness to my hesitating acceptance of its teaching by arguments in which truth or probability may claim my belief?" We are all dumb with amazement. Then, of his own accord, he breaks forth in these words: "I wonder whether the Lord and Ruler of the world did indeed fill the womb of a virgin;—did his mother endure the protracted fatigues of ten months, and, being yet a virgin, in due season bring forth her child, and continue even after that with her virginity intact?" To this he adds other statements: "Within the small body of a crying infant He is concealed whom the universe scarcely can contain; He bears the years of childhood, He grows up, He is established in the vigour of manhood; this Governor is so long an exile from His own dwelling-place, and the care of the whole world is transferred to one body of insignificant dimensions. Moreover, He falls asleep, takes food to support Him, is subject to all the sensations of mortal men. Nor did the proofs of so great majesty shine forth with adequate fulness of evidence; for the casting out of devils, the curing of the sick, and the restoration of the dead to life are, if you consider others who have wrought these wonders, but small works for God to do." We prevent him from continuing such questions, and the meeting having broken up, we referred the matter to the valuable decision of experience beyond our own, lest, by too rashly intruding into hidden things, the error, innocent thus far, should become blameworthy.

You have heard, O man worthy of all honour, the confession of our ignorance; you perceive what is requested at your hands. Your reputation is interested in our obtaining an answer to these questions. Ignorance may, without harm to religion, be tolerated in other priests; but when we come to Bishop Augustine, whatever we find unknown to him is no part of the Christian system. May the Supreme God protect your venerable Grace, my lord truly holy and justly revered!

LETTER CXXXVI.

(A.D. 412.)

TO AUGUSTINE, MY LORD MOST VENERABLE, AND FATHER SINGULARLY WORTHY OF ALL POSSIBLE SERVICE FROM ME, I, MARCELLINUS, SEND GREETING.

1. The noble Volusianus read to me the letter of your Holiness, and, at my urgent solicitation, he read to many more the sentences which had won my admiration, for, like everything else coming from your pen, they were worthy of admiration. Breathing as it did a humble spirit, and rich in the grace of divine eloquence, it succeeded easily in pleasing the reader. What especially pleased me was your strenuous effort to establish and hold up the steps of one who is somewhat hesitating, by counselling him to form a good resolution. For I have every day some discussion with the same man, so far as my abilities, or rather my lack of talent, may enable me. Moved by the earnest entreaties of his pious mother, I am at pains to visit him frequently, and he is so good as return my visits from time to time. But on receiving this letter from your venerable Eminence, though he is kept back from firm faith in the true God by the influence of a class of persons who abound in this city, he was so moved, that, as he himself tells me, he was prevented only by the fear of undue prolixity in his letter from unfolding to you every possible difficulty in regard to the Christian faith. Some things, however, he has very earnestly asked you to explain, expressing himself in a polished and accurate style, and with the perspicuity and brilliancy of Roman eloquence, such as you will yourself deem worthy of approbation. The question which he has submitted to you is indeed worn threadbare in controversy, and the craftiness which, from the same quarter, assails with reproaches the Lord's incarnation is well known. But as I am confident that whatever you write in reply will be of use to a very large number, I would approach you with the request, that even in this question you would condescend to give a thoroughly guarded answer to their false statement that in His works the Lord performed nothing beyond what other men

have been able to do. They are accustomed to bring forward their Apollonius and Apuleius, and other men who professed magical arts, whose miracles they maintained to have been greater than the Lord's.

2. The noble Volusianus aforesaid declared also in the presence of a number, that there were many other things which might not unreasonably be added to the question which he has sent, were it not that, as I have already stated, brevity had been specially studied by him in his letter. Although, however, he forebore from writing them, he did not pass them over in silence. For he is wont to say that, even if a reasonable account of the Lord's incarnation were now given to him, it would still be very difficult to give a satisfactory reason why this God, who is affirmed to be the God also of the Old Testament, is pleased with new sacrifices after having rejected the ancient sacrifices. For he alleges that nothing could be corrected but that which is proved to have been previously not rightly done; or that what has once been done rightly ought not to be altered in the very least. That which has been rightly done, he said, cannot be changed without wrong, especially because the variation might bring upon the Deity the reproach of inconstancy. Another objection which he stated was, that the Christian doctrine and preaching were in no way consistent with the duties and rights of citizens; because, to quote an instance frequently alleged, among its precepts we find, "Recompense to no man evil for evil,"[1] and, "Whosoever shall smite thee on one cheek, turn to him the other also; and if any man take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also; and whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain;"[2]—all which he affirms to be contrary to the duties and rights of citizens. For who would submit to have anything taken from him by an enemy, or forbear from retaliating the evils of war upon an invader who ravaged a Roman province? The other precepts, as your Eminence understands, are open to similar objections. Volusianus thinks that all these difficulties may be added to the question formerly stated, especially because it is manifest (though he is silent on this point) that very great calamities

[1] Rom. xii. 17. [2] Matt. v. 39–41.

have befallen the commonwealth under the government of emperors observing, for the most part, the Christian religion.[1]

3. Wherefore, as your Grace condescends along with me to acknowledge, it is important that all these difficulties be met by a full, thorough, and luminous reply (since the welcome answer of your Holiness will doubtless be put into many hands); especially because, while this discussion was going on, a distinguished lord and proprietor in the region of Hippo was present, who ironically said some flattering things concerning your Holiness, and affirmed that he had been by no means satisfied when he inquired into these matters himself.

I, therefore, not unmindful of your promise, but insisting on its fulfilment, beseech you to write, on the questions submitted, treatises which will be of incredible service to the Church, especially at the present time.

LETTER CXXXVII.

(A.D. 412.)

TO MY MOST EXCELLENT SON, THE NOBLE AND JUSTLY DISTINGUISHED LORD VOLUSIANUS, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

CHAP. I. 1. I have read your letter, containing an abstract of a notable conversation given with praiseworthy conciseness. I feel bound to reply to it, and to forbear from alleging any excuse for delay; for it happens opportunely that I have a short time of leisure from occupation with the affairs of other persons. I have also put off in the meantime dictating to my amanuensis certain things to which I had purposed to devote this leisure, for I think it would be a grievous injustice to delay answering questions which I had myself exhorted the questioner to propound. For which of us who are administering, as we are able, the grace of Christ would wish to see you instructed in Christian doctrine only so far as might suffice to secure to yourself salvation—not salvation in this present life, which, as the word of God is careful to remind us, is but a vapour appearing for a little while and then vanishing away, but that salvation in order to the obtain-

[1] See Gibbon, chap. xv. vol. II. p. 326.

ing and eternal possession of which we are Christians? It seems to us too little that you should receive only so much instruction as suffices to your own deliverance. For your gifted mind, and your singularly able and lucid power of speaking, ought to be of service to all others around you, against whom, whether slowness or perversity be the cause, it is necessary to defend in a competent way the dispensation of such abounding grace, which small minds in their arrogance despise, boasting that they can do very great things, while in fact they can do nothing to cure or even to curb their own vices.

2. You ask: "Whether the Lord and Ruler of the world did indeed fill the womb of a virgin? did his mother endure the protracted fatigues of ten months, and, being yet a virgin, in due season bring forth her child, and continue even after that with her virginity intact? Was He whom the universe is supposed to be scarcely able to contain concealed within the small body of a crying infant? did He bear the years of childhood, and grow up and become established in the vigour of manhood? Was this Governor so long an exile from His own dwelling-place, and was the care of the whole world transferred to a body of such insignificant dimensions? Did He sleep, did He take food as nourishment, and was He subject to all the sensations of mortal men?" You go on to say that "the proofs of His great majesty do not shine forth with any adequate fulness of evidence; for the casting out of devils, the curing of the sick, and the restoration of the dead are, if we consider others who have performed these wonders, but small works for God to do."[1] This question, you say, was introduced in a certain meeting of friends by one of the company, but that the rest of you prevented him from bringing forward any further questions, and, breaking up the meeting, deferred the consideration of the matter till you should have the benefit of experience beyond your own, lest, by too rashly intruding into hidden things, the error, innocent thus far, should become blameworthy.

3. Thereupon you appeal to me, and request me to observe what is desired from me after this confession of your ignorance. You add, that my reputation is concerned in your obtaining

[1] Letter CXXXV. sec. 2, p. 173.

an answer to these questions, because, though ignorance is tolerated without injury to religion in other priests, when an inquiry is addressed to me, who am a bishop, whatever is not known to me must be no part of the Christian system.

I begin, therefore, by requesting you to lay aside the opinion which you have too easily formed concerning me, and dismiss those sentiments, though they are gratifying evidences of your goodwill, and believe my testimony rather than any other's regarding myself, if you reciprocate my affection. For such is the depth of the Christian Scriptures, that even if I were attempting to study them and nothing else from early boyhood to decrepit old age, with the utmost leisure, the most unwearied zeal, and talents greater than I have, I would be still daily making progress in discovering their treasures; not that there is so great difficulty in coming through them to know the things necessary to salvation, but when any one has accepted these truths with the faith that is indispensable as the foundation of a life of piety and uprightness, so many things which are veiled under manifold shadows of mystery remain to be inquired into by those who are advancing in the study, and so great is the depth of wisdom not only in the words in which these have been expressed, but also in the things themselves, that the experience of the oldest, the ablest, and the most zealous students of Scripture illustrates what Scripture itself has said: "When a man hath done, then he beginneth."[1]

CHAP. II. 4. But why say more as to this? I must rather address myself to the question which you propose. In the first place, I wish you to understand that the Christian doctrine does not hold that the Godhead was so blended with the human nature in which He was born of the virgin that He either relinquished or lost the administration of the universe, or transferred it to that body as a small and limited material substance. Such an opinion is held only by men who are incapable of conceiving of anything but material substances—whether more dense, like water and earth, or more subtle, like air and light; but all alike distinguished by this condition, that none of them can be in its entirety every-

[1] Ecclus. xviii. 6.

where, because, by reason of its many parts, it cannot but have one part here, another there, and however great or small the body may be, it must occupy some place, and so fill it that in its entirety it is in no one part of the space occupied. And hence it is the distinctive property of material bodies that they can be condensed and rarefied, contracted and dilated, crushed into small fragments and enlarged to great masses. The nature of the soul is very far different from that of the body; and how much more different must be the nature of God, who is the Creator of both soul and body! God is not said to fill the world in the same way as water, air, and even light occupy space, so that with a greater or smaller part of Himself He occupies a greater or smaller part of the world. He is able to be everywhere present in the entirety of His being: He cannot be confined in any place: He can come without leaving the place where He was: He can depart without forsaking the place to which He had come.

5. The mind of man wonders at this, and because it cannot comprehend it, refuses, perhaps, to believe it. Let it, however, not go on to wonder incredulously at the attributes of the Deity without first wondering in like manner at the mysteries within itself;[1] let it, if possible, raise itself for a little above the body, and above those things which it is accustomed to perceive by the bodily organs, and let it contemplate what that is which uses the body as its instrument. Perhaps it cannot do this, for it requires, as one has said, great power of mind to call the mind aside from the senses, and to lead thought away from its wonted track.[2] Let the mind, then, examine the bodily senses in this somewhat unusual manner, and with the utmost attention. There are five distinct bodily senses, which cannot exist either without the body or without the soul; because perception by the senses is possible, on the one hand, only while a man lives, and the body receives life from the soul; and on the other hand, only by the instrumentality of the bodily vessels and organs, through which we exercise sight, hearing, and the three other senses. Let the reasoning soul concentrate attention upon

[1] We follow the reading of nine MSS., *mirata*, instead of that of the text, *ingrata*.
[2] Cicero, *Quæst. Tuscul.* i.

this subject, and consider the senses of the body not by these senses themselves, but by its own intelligence and reason. A man cannot, of course, perceive by these senses unless he lives; but up to the time when soul and body are separated by death, he lives in the body. How, then, does his soul, which lives nowhere else than in his body, perceive things which are beyond the surface of that body? Are not the stars in heaven very remote from his body? and yet does he not see the sun yonder? and is not seeing an exercise of the bodily senses—nay, is it not the noblest of them all? What, then? Does he live in heaven as well as in his body, because he perceives by one of his senses what is in heaven, and perception by sense cannot be in a place where there is no life of the person perceiving? Or does he perceive even where he is not living—because while he lives only in his own body, his perceptive sense is active also in those places which, outside of his body and remote from it, contain the objects with which he is in contact by sight? Do you see how great a mystery there is even in a sense so open to our observation as that which we call sight? Consider hearing also, and say whether the soul diffuses itself in some way abroad beyond the body. For how do we say, "Some one knocks at the door," unless we exercise the sense of hearing at the place where the knock is sounding? In this case also, therefore, we live beyond the limits of our bodies. Or can we perceive by sense in a place in which we are not living? But we know that sense cannot be in exercise where life is not.

6. The other three senses are exercised through immediate contact with their own organs. Perhaps this may be reasonably disputed in regard to the sense of smell; but there is no controversy as to the senses of taste and touch, that we perceive nowhere else than by contact with our bodily organism the things which we taste and touch. Let these three senses, therefore, be set aside from present consideration. The senses of sight and hearing present to us a wonderful question, requiring us to explain either how the soul can perceive by these senses in a place where it does not live, or how it can live in a place where it is not. For it is not anywhere but in its own body, and yet it perceives by these senses in places beyond

that body. For in whatever place the soul sees anything, in that place it is exercising the faculty of perception, because seeing is an act of perception; and in whatever place the soul hears anything, in that place it is exercising the faculty of perception, because hearing is an act of perception. Wherefore the soul is either living in that place where it sees or hears, and consequently is itself in that place, or it exercises perception in a place where it is not living, or it is living in a place and yet at the same moment is not there. All these things are astonishing; not one of them can be stated without seeming absurdity; and we are speaking only of senses which are mortal. What, then, is the soul itself which is beyond the bodily senses, that is to say, which resides in the understanding whereby it considers these mysteries? For it is not by means of the senses that it forms a judgment concerning the senses themselves. And do we suppose that something incredible is told us regarding the omnipotence of God, when it is affirmed that the Word of God, by whom all things were made, did so assume a body from the Virgin, and manifest Himself with mortal senses, as neither to destroy His own immortality, nor to change His eternity, nor to diminish His power, nor to relinquish the government of the world, nor to withdraw from the bosom of the Father, that is, from the secret place where He is with Him and in Him?

7. Understand the nature of the Word of God, by whom all things were made, to be such that you cannot think of any part of the Word as passing, and, from being future, becoming past. He remains as He is, and He is everywhere in His entirety. He comes when He is manifested, and departs when He is concealed. But whether concealed or manifested, He is present with us as light is present to the eyes both of the seeing and of the blind; but it is felt to be present by the man who sees, and absent by him who is blind. In like manner, the sound of the voice is near alike to the hearing and to the deaf, but it makes its presence known to the former and is hidden from the latter. But what is more wonderful than what happens in connection with the sound of our voices and our words, a thing, forsooth, which passes away in a moment? For when we speak, there is no place for even the

next syllable till after the preceding one has ceased to sound; nevertheless, if one hearer be present, he hears the whole of what we say, and if two hearers be present, both hear the same, and to each of them it is the whole; and if a multitude listen in silence, they do not break up the sounds like loaves of bread, to be distributed among them individually, but all that is uttered is imparted to all and to each in its entirety. Consider this, and say if it is not more incredible that the abiding Word of God should not accomplish in the universe what the passing word of man accomplishes in the ears of listeners, namely, that as the word of man is present in its entirety to each and all of the hearers, so the Word of God should be present in the entirety of His being at the same moment everywhere.

8. There is, therefore, no reason to fear in regard to the small body of the Lord in His infancy, lest in it the Godhead should seem to have been straitened. For it is not in vast size but in power that God is great: He has in His providence given to ants and to bees senses superior to those given to asses and camels; He forms the huge proportions of the fig-tree [1] from one of the minutest seeds, although many smaller plants spring from much larger seeds; He also has furnished the small pupil of the eye with the power which, by one glance, sweeps over almost the half of heaven in a moment; He diffuses the whole fivefold system of the nerves over the body from one centre and point in the brain; He dispenses vital motion throughout the whole body from the heart, a member comparatively small; and by these and other similar things, He, who in small things is great, mysteriously produces that which is great from things which are exceedingly little. Such is the greatness of His power that He is conscious of no difficulty in that which is difficult. It was this same power which originated, not from without, but from within, the conception of a child in the Virgin's womb: this same power associated with Himself a human soul, and through it also a human body—in short, the whole human nature to be elevated by its union with Him—without His being thereby lowered in

[1] See Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* Book vii. 2: "In India sub una ficu turmæ conduntur equitum." See also Book xii. c. 5.

any degree; justly assuming from it the name of humanity, while amply giving to it the name of Godhead. The body of the infant Jesus was brought forth from the womb of His mother, still a virgin, by the same power which afterwards introduced His body when He was a man through the closed doors into the upper chamber.[1] Here, if the reason of the event is sought out, it will no longer be a miracle; if an example of a precisely similar event is demanded, it will no longer be unique.[2] Let us grant that God can do something which we must admit to be beyond our comprehension. In such wonders the whole explanation of the work is the power of Him by whom it is wrought.

[1] John xx. 26.

[2] This sentence having been misunderstood by Bishop Evodius, who quotes and comments upon it in Letter CLXI., Augustine, in replying in Letter CLXII., writes a few sentences, which, as the letters then exchanged with Evodius have been omitted in this selection, we here insert:—"Our sense of wonder is excited when either the reason of a thing is hidden from us, or the thing itself is extraordinary, that is, either unique or rare. It was in reference to the former cause of wonder, namely, the reason of a thing being undiscovered, that, when answering those who declare it to be incredible that Christ was born of a virgin, and that she remained a virgin notwithstanding, I said in the letter which you refer to as read by you, 'If the reason of this event is sought out, it will be no longer a miracle;' for I said this not because the event was without a reason, but because the reason of it is hidden from those to whom it has pleased God that it should be a miracle. . . . For all the works of God, both ordinary and extraordinary, proceed from causes and reasons which are right and faultless, When the causes and reasons of any of His operations are hidden from us, we are filled with wonder at the event; but when the causes and reasons of events are seen by us, we say that they take place in ordinary course and in harmony with our experience, and that they are not to be wondered at since they occur, because they are only what reason required to be done. . . . As to the latter cause of wonder, namely, that an event is unusual, we have an example of this when we read concerning the Lord that He marvelled at the faith of the centurion; for the reason of no event whatever could be concealed from Him, but His wonder has been recorded here for the commendation of one whose equal had not appeared among the Jews, and accordingly the Lord's wondering is sufficiently explained by His words: 'I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel' (Luke vii. 9). As to examples of events similar to the miraculous birth of Christ, you are wholly mistaken in supposing that you have found such in the production of a worm within an apple, and other examples which you mention. For instances of a certain degree of resemblance, more or less remote, have been with considerable ingenuity alleged: but Christ alone was born of a virgin; whence you may understand why I said that this was an event without parallel, adding in the letter already referred to the words: 'If an example of a precisely similar event is demanded, it will no longer be unique'" (Letter CLXII. secs. 6, 7).

CHAP. III. 9. The fact that He took rest in sleep, and was nourished by food, and experienced all the feelings of humanity, is the evidence to men of the reality of that human nature which He assumed but did not destroy. Behold, this was the fact; and yet some heretics, by a perverted admiration and praise of His power, have refused altogether to acknowledge the reality of His human nature, in which is the guarantee of all that grace by which He saves those who believe in Him, containing deep treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and imparting faith to the minds which He raises to the eternal contemplation of unchangeable truth. What if the Almighty had created the human nature of Christ not by causing Him to be born of a mother, but by some other way, and had presented Him suddenly to the eyes of mankind? What if the Lord had not passed through the stages of progress from infancy to manhood, and had taken neither food nor sleep? Would not this have confirmed the erroneous impression above referred to, and have made it impossible to believe at all that He had taken to Himself true human nature; and, while leaving what was marvellous, would eliminate the element of mercy from His actions? But now He has so appeared as the Mediator between God and men, that, uniting the two natures in one person, He both exalted what was ordinary by what was extraordinary, and tempered what was extraordinary by what was ordinary in Himself.

10. But where in all the varied movements of creation is there any work of God which is not wonderful, were it not that through familiarity these wonders have become small in our esteem? Nay, how many common things are trodden under foot, which, if examined carefully, awaken our astonishment! Take, for example, the properties of seeds: who can either comprehend or declare the variety of species, the vitality, vigour, and secret power by which they from within small compass evolve great things? Now the human body and soul which He took to Himself was created without seed by Him who in the natural world created originally seeds from no pre-existent seeds. In the body which thus became His, He who, without any liability to change in Himself, has woven according to His counsel the vicissitudes of all past

centuries, became subject to the succession of seasons and the ordinary stages of the life of man. For His body, as it began to exist at a point of time, became developed with the lapse of time. But the Word of God, who was in the beginning, and to whom the ages of time owe their existence, did not bow to time as bringing round the event of His incarnation apart from His consent, but chose the point of time at which He freely took our nature to Himself. The human nature was brought into union with the divine; God did not withdraw from Himself.[1]

11. Some insist upon being furnished with an explanation of the manner in which the Godhead was so united with a human soul and body as to constitute the one person of Christ, when it was necessary that this should be done once in the world's history, with as much boldness as if they were themselves able to furnish an explanation of the manner in which the soul is so united to the body as to constitute the one person of a man, an event which is occurring every day. For just as the soul is united to the body in one person so as to constitute man, in the same way is God united to man in one person so as to constitute Christ. In the former personality there is a combination of soul and body; in the latter there is a combination of the Godhead and man. Let my reader, however, guard against borrowing his idea of the combination from the properties of material bodies, by which two fluids when combined are so mixed that neither preserves its original character; although even among material bodies there are exceptions, such as light, which sustains no change when combined with the atmosphere. In the person of man, therefore, there is a combination of soul and body; in the person of Christ there is a combination of the Godhead with man; for when the Word of God was united to a soul having a body, He took into union with Himself both the soul and the body. The former event takes place daily in the beginning of life in individuals of the human race; the latter took place once for the salvation of men. And yet of the two events, the combination of two immaterial substances ought to be more easily believed than a combination in which the one is immaterial and the other material. For if

[1] Homo quippe Deo accessit, non Deus a se recessit.

the soul is not mistaken in regard to its own nature, it understands itself to be immaterial. Much more certainly does this attribute belong to the Word of God; and consequently the combination of the Word with the human soul is a combination which ought to be much more credible than that of soul and body. The latter is realized by us in ourselves; the former we are commanded to believe to have been realized in Christ. But if both of them were alike foreign to our experience, and we were enjoined to believe that both had taken place, which of the two would we more readily believe to have occurred? Would we not admit that two immaterial substances could be more easily combined than one immaterial and one material; unless, perhaps, it be unsuitable to use the word combination in connection with these things, because of the difference between their nature and that of material substances, both in themselves and as known to us?

12. Wherefore the Word of God, who is also the Son of God, co-eternal with the Father, the Power and the Wisdom of God,[1] mightily pervading and harmoniously ordering all things, from the highest limit of the intelligent to the lowest limit of the material creation,[2] revealed and concealed, nowhere confined, nowhere divided, nowhere distended, but without dimensions, everywhere present in His entirety,—this Word of God, I say, took to Himself, in a manner entirely different from that in which He is present to other creatures, the soul and body of a man, and made, by the union of Himself therewith, the one person Jesus Christ, Mediator between God and men,[3] in His deity equal with the Father, in His flesh, *i.e.* in His human nature, inferior to the Father, —unchangeably immortal in respect of the divine nature, in which He is equal with the Father, and yet changeable and mortal in respect of the infirmity which was His through participation with our nature.

In this Christ there came to men, at the time which He knew to be most fitting, and which He had fixed before the world began, the *instruction* and the *help* necessary to the obtaining of eternal salvation. *Instruction* came by Him, because those truths which had been, for men's advantage,

[1] 1 Cor. i. 24. [2] Wisd. viii. 1. [3] 1 Tim. ii. 5.

spoken before that time on earth not only by the holy prophets, all whose words were true, but also by philosophers and even poets and authors in every department of literature (for beyond question they mixed much truth with what was false), might by the actual presentation of His authority in human nature be confirmed as true for the sake of those who could not perceive and distinguish them in the light of essential Truth, which Truth was, even before He assumed human nature, present to all who were capable of receiving truth. Moreover, by the fact of His incarnation, He taught this above all other things for our benefit,—that whereas men longing after the Divine Being supposed, from pride rather than piety, that they must approach Him not directly, but through heavenly powers which they regarded as gods, and through various forbidden rites which were not holy but profane,—in which worship devils succeed, through the bond which pride forms between mankind and them, in taking the place of holy angels,—now men might understand that the God whom they were regarding as far removed, and whom they approached not directly but through mediating powers, is actually so very near to the pious longings of men after Him, that He has condescended to take a human soul and body into such union with Himself that this complete man is joined to Him in the same way as the body is joined to the soul in man, excepting that whereas both body and soul have a common progressive development, He does not participate in this growth, because it implies mutability, a property which God cannot assume. Again, in this Christ the *help* necessary to salvation was brought to men, for without the grace of that faith which is from Him, no one can either subdue vicious desires, or be cleansed by pardon from the guilt of any power of sinful desire which he may not have wholly vanquished. As to the effects produced by His instruction, is there now even an imbecile, however weak, or a silly woman, however low, that does not believe in the immortality of the soul and the reality of a life after death? Yet these are truths which, when Pherecydes[1] the Assyrian for the first time maintained

[1] Pherecydes, a native not of Assyria, but of Syros, one of the Cyclades, was a disciple of Pittacus of Mitylene, and teacher of Pythagoras. He flourished B.C. 544.

them in discussion among the Greeks of old, moved Pythagoras of Samos so deeply by their novelty, as to make him turn from the exercises of the athlete to the studies of the philosopher. But now what Virgil said we all behold: "The balsam of Assyria grows everywhere."[1] And as to the help given through the grace of Christ, in Him truly are the words of the same poet fulfilled: "With Thee as our leader, the obliteration of all the traces of our sin which remain shall deliver the earth from perpetual alarm."[2]

CHAP. IV. 13. "But," they say, "the proofs of so great majesty did not shine forth with adequate fulness of evidence; for the casting out of devils, the healing of the sick, and the restoration of the dead to life are but small works for God to do, if the others who have wrought similar wonders be borne in mind."[3] We ourselves admit that the prophets wrought some miracles like those performed by Christ. For among these miracles what is more wonderful than the raising of the dead? Yet both Elijah and Elisha did this.[4] As to the miracles of magicians, and the question whether they also raised the dead, let those pronounce an opinion who strive, not as accusers, but as panegyrists, to prove Apuleius guilty of those charges of practising magical arts from which he himself takes abundant pains to defend his reputation. We read that the magicians of Egypt, the most skilled in these arts, were vanquished by Moses, the servant of God, when they were working wonderfully by impious enchantments, and he, by simply calling upon God in prayer, overthrew all their machinations.[5] But this Moses himself and all the other true prophets prophesied concerning the Lord Christ, and gave to Him great glory; they predicted that He would come not as One merely equal or superior to them in the same power of working miracles, but as One who was truly God the Lord of all, and who became man for the benefit of men. He was pleased to do also some miracles, such as they had done, to prevent the incongruity of His not doing in person such things as He had done by them. Nevertheless, He was to do

[1] "Assyrium vulgo nascetur amomum."—Eclogue iv. [2] *Ibid.*
[3] Letter CXXXV. sec. 2, p. 173. [4] 1 Kings xvii. 22; 2 Kings iv. 35.
[5] Ex. vii., viii.

also some things peculiar to Himself, namely, to be born of a virgin, to rise from the dead, to ascend to heaven. I know not what greater things he can look for who thinks these too little for God to do.

14. For I think that such signs of divine power are demanded by these objectors as were not suitable for Him to do when wearing the nature of men. The Word was in the beginning, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and by Him all things were made.[1] Now, when the Word became flesh, was it necessary for Him to create another world, that we might believe Him to be the person by whom the world was made? But within this world it would have been impossible to make another greater than itself, or equal to it. If, however, He were to make a world inferior to that which now exists, this, too, would be considered too small a work to prove His deity. Wherefore, since it was not necessary that He should make a new world, He made new things in the world. For that a man should be born of a virgin, and raised from the dead to eternal life, and exalted above the heavens, is perchance a work involving a greater exertion of power than the creating of a world. Here, probably, objectors may answer that they do not believe that these things took place. What, then, can be done for men who despise smaller evidences as inadequate, and reject greater evidences as incredible? That life has been restored to the dead is believed, because it has been accomplished by others, and is too small a work to prove him who performs it to be God: that a true body was created in a virgin, and being raised from death to eternal life, was taken up to heaven, is not believed, because no one else has done this, and it is what God alone could do. On this principle every man is to accept with equanimity whatever he thinks easy for himself not indeed to do, but to conceive, and is to reject as false and fictitious whatever goes beyond that limit. I beseech you, do not be like these men.

15. These topics are elsewhere more amply discussed, and in fundamental questions of doctrine every intricate point has been opened up by thorough investigation and debate; but faith

[1] John i. 1.

gives the understanding access to these things, unbelief closes the door. What man might not be moved to faith in the doctrine of Christ by such a remarkable chain of events from the beginning, and by the manner in which the epochs of the world are linked together, so that our faith in regard to present things is assisted by what happened in the past, and the record of earlier and ancient things is attested by later and more recent events? One is chosen from among the Chaldeans, a man endowed with most eminent piety and faith, that to him may be given divine promises, appointed to be fulfilled in the last times of the world, after the lapse of so many centuries; and it is foretold that in his seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.[1] This man, worshipping the one true God, the Creator of the universe, begets in his old age a son, when sterility and advanced years had made his wife give up all expectation of becoming a mother. The descendants of this son become a very numerous tribe, being increased in Egypt, to which place they had been removed from the East, by Divine Providence multiplying as time went on both the promises given and the works wrought on their behalf. From Egypt they come forth a mighty nation, being brought out with terrible signs and wonders; and the wicked nations of the promised land being driven out from before them, they are brought into it and settled there, and exalted to the position of a kingdom. Thereafter, frequently provoking by prevailing sin and idolatrous impieties the true God, who had bestowed on them so many benefits, and experiencing alternately the chastisements of calamity and the consolations of restored prosperity, the history of the nation is brought down to the incarnation and the manifestation of Christ. Predictions that this Christ, being the Word of God, the Son of God, and God Himself, was to become incarnate, to die, to rise again, to ascend into heaven, to have multitudes of all nations through the power of His name surrendering themselves to Him, and that by Him pardon of sins and eternal salvation would be given to all who believe in Him,—these predictions, I say, have been published by all the promises given to that nation, by all the prophecies, the institution of the priest-

[1] Gen. xii.

hood, the sacrifices, the temple, and, in short, by all their sacred mysteries.

16. Accordingly Christ comes: in His birth, life, words, deeds, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, all which the prophets had foretold is fulfilled.[1] He sends the Holy Spirit; fills with this Spirit the believers when they are assembled in one house, and expecting with prayer and ardent desire this promised gift. Being thus filled with the Holy Spirit, they speak immediately in the tongues of all nations, they boldly confute errors, they preach the truth that is most profitable for mankind, they exhort men to repent of their past blameworthy lives, and promise pardon by the free grace of God. Signs and miracles suitable for confirmation follow their preaching of piety and of the true religion. The cruel enmity of unbelief is stirred up against them; they bear predicted trials, they hope for promised blessings, and teach that which they had been commanded to make known. Few in number at first, they become scattered like seed throughout the world; they convert nations with wondrous facility; they grow in number in the midst of enemies; they become increased by persecutions; and, under the severity of hardships, instead of being straitened, they extend their influence to the utmost boundaries of the earth. From being very ignorant, despised, and few, they become enlightened, distinguished, and numerous, men of illustrious talents and of polished eloquence; they also bring under the yoke of Christ, and attract to the work of preaching the way of holiness and salvation, the marvellous attainments of men remarkable for genius, eloquence, and erudition. Amid alternations of adversity and prosperity, they watchfully practise patience and self-control; and when the world's day is drawing near its close, and the approaching consummation is heralded by the calamities which exhaust its energies, they, seeing in this the fulfilment of prophecy, only expect with increased confidence the everlasting blessedness of the heavenly city. Moreover, amidst all these changes, the unbelief of the heathen nations continues to rage against the Church of Christ; she gains the victory by patient endurance, and by the maintenance of unshaken faith in the face of the

[1] Matt. i. 22.

cruelties of her adversaries. The sacrifice of Him in whom the truth, long veiled under mystic promises, is revealed, having been offered, those sacrifices by which it was prefigured are finally abolished by the utter destruction of the Jewish temple. The Jewish nation, itself rejected because of unbelief, being now rooted out from its own land, is dispersed to every region of the world, in order that it may carry everywhere the Holy Scriptures, and that in this way our adversaries themselves may bring before mankind the testimony furnished by the prophecies concerning Christ and His Church, thus precluding the possibility of the supposition that these predictions were forged by us to suit the time; in which prophecies, also, the unbelief of these very Jews is foretold. The temples, images, and impious worship of the heathen divinities are overthrown gradually and in succession, according to the prophetic intimations. Heresies bud forth against the name of Christ, though veiling themselves under His name, as had been foretold, by which the doctrine of the holy religion is tested and developed. All these things are now seen to be accomplished, in exact fulfilment of the predictions which we read in Scripture; and from these important and numerous instances of fulfilled prophecy, the fulfilment of the predictions which remain is confidently expected. Where, then, is the mind, having aspirations after eternity, and moved by the shortness of this present life, which can resist the clearness and perfection of these evidences of the divine origin of our faith?

CHAP. V. 17. What discourses or writings of philosophers, what laws of any commonwealth in any land or age, are worthy for a moment to be compared with the two commandments on which Christ saith that all the law and the prophets hang: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"?[1] All philosophy is here,—physics, ethics, logic: the *first*, because in God the Creator are all the causes of all existences in nature; the *second*, because a good and honest life is not produced in any other way than by loving, in the manner in which they should be loved, the proper objects of our love, namely, God and our neighbour; and the *third*, be-

[1] Matt. xxii. 37-39.

cause God alone is the Truth and the Light of the rational soul. Here also is security for the welfare and renown of a commonwealth; for no state is perfectly established and preserved otherwise than on the foundation and by the bond of faith and of firm concord, when the highest and truest common good, namely, God, is loved by all, and men love each other in Him without dissimulation, because they love one another for His sake from whom they cannot disguise the real character of their love.

18. Consider, moreover, the style in which Sacred Scripture is composed,—how accessible it is to all men, though its deeper mysteries are penetrable to very few. The plain truths which it contains it declares in the artless language of familiar friendship to the hearts both of the unlearned and of the learned; but even the truths which it veils in symbols it does not set forth in stiff and stately sentences, which a mind somewhat sluggish and uneducated might shrink from approaching, as a poor man shrinks from the presence of the rich; but, by the condescension of its style, it invites all not only to be fed with the truth which is plain, but also to be exercised by the truth which is concealed, having both in its simple and in its obscure portions the same truth. Lest what is easily understood should beget satiety in the reader, the same truth being in another place more obscurely expressed becomes again desired, and, being desired, is somehow invested with a new attractiveness, and thus is received with pleasure into the heart. By these means wayward minds are corrected, weak minds are nourished, and strong minds are filled with pleasure, in such a way as is profitable to all. This doctrine has no enemy but the man who, being in error, is ignorant of its incomparable usefulness, or, being spiritually diseased, is averse to its healing power.

19. You see what a long letter I have written. If, therefore, anything perplexes you, and you regard it of sufficient importance to be discussed between us, let not yourself be straitened by keeping within the bounds of ordinary letters; for you know as well as any one what long letters the ancients wrote when they were treating of any subject which they were not able briefly to explain. And even if the custom of

authors in other departments of literature had been different, the authority of Christian writers, whose example has a worthier claim upon our imitation, might be set before us. Observe, therefore, the length of the apostolic epistles, and of the commentaries written on these divine oracles, and do not hesitate either to ask many questions if you have many difficulties, or to handle more fully the questions which you propound, in order that, in so far as it can be achieved with such abilities as we possess, there may remain no cloud of doubt to obscure the light of truth.

20. For I am aware that your Excellency has to encounter the most determined opposition from certain persons, who think, or would have others think, that Christian doctrine is incompatible with the welfare of the commonwealth, because they wish to see the commonwealth established not by the stedfast practice of virtue, but by granting impunity to vice. But with God the crimes in which many are banded together do not pass unavenged, as is often the case with a king, or any other magistrate who is only a man. Moreover, His mercy and grace, published to men by Christ, who is Himself man, and imparted to man by the same Christ, who is also God and the Son of God, never fail those who live by faith in Him and piously worship Him, in adversity patiently and bravely bearing the trials of this life, in prosperity using with self-control and with compassion for others the good things of this life; destined to receive, for faithfulness in both conditions, an eternal recompense in that divine and heavenly city in which there shall be no longer calamity to be painfully endured, nor inordinate desire to be with laborious care controlled, where our only work shall be to preserve, without any difficulty and with perfect liberty, our love to God and to our neighbour.

May the infinitely compassionate omnipotence of God preserve you in safety and increase your happiness, my noble and distinguished Lord, and my most excellent son. With profound respect, as is due to your worth, I salute your pious and most truly venerable mother, whose prayers on your behalf may God hear! My pious brother and fellow bishop, Possidius, warmly salutes your Grace.

LETTER CXXXVIII.

(A.D. 412.)

TO MARCELLINUS, MY NOBLE AND JUSTLY FAMOUS LORD, MY SON MOST BELOVED AND LONGED FOR, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

CHAP. I. 1. In writing to the illustrious and most eloquent Volusianus, whom we both sincerely love, I thought it right to confine myself to answering the questions which he thought proper himself to state; but as to the questions which you have submitted to me in your letter for discussion and solution, as suggested or proposed either by Volusianus himself or by others, it is fitting that such reply to these as I may be able to give should be addressed to you. I shall attempt this, not in the manner in which it would require to be done in a formal treatise, but in the manner which is suitable to the conversational familiarity of a letter, in order that, if you, who know their state of mind by daily discussions, think it expedient, this letter also may be read to your friends. But if this communication be not adapted to them, because of their not being prepared by the piety of faith to give ear to it, let what you consider adapted to them be in the first place prepared between ourselves, and afterwards let what may have been thus prepared be communicated to them. For there are many things from which their minds may in the meantime shrink and recoil, which they may perhaps by and by be persuaded to accept as true, either by the use of more copious and skilful arguments, or by an appeal to authority which, in their opinion, may not without impropriety be resisted.

2. In your letter you state that some are perplexed by the question, "Why this God, who is proved to be the God also of the Old Testament, is pleased with new sacrifices after having rejected the ancient ones. For they allege that nothing can be corrected but that which is proved to have been previously not rightly done, or that what has once been done rightly ought not to be altered in the very least: that which has

been rightly done, they say, cannot be changed without wrong."[1] I quote these words from your letter. Were I disposed to give a copious reply to this objection, time would fail me long before I had exhausted the instances in which the processes of nature itself and the works of men undergo changes according to the circumstances of the time, while, at the same time, there is nothing mutable in the plan or principle by which these changes are regulated. Of these I may mention a few, that, stimulated by them, your wakeful observation may run, as it were, from them to many more of the same kind. Does not summer follow winter, the temperature gradually increasing in warmth? Do not night and day in turn succeed each other? How often do our own lives experience changes! Boyhood departing, never to return, gives place to youth; manhood, destined itself to continue only for a season, takes in turn the place of youth; and old age, closing the term of manhood, is itself closed by death.[2] All these things are changed, but the plan of Divine Providence which appoints these successive changes is not changed. I suppose, also, that the principles of agriculture are not changed when the farmer appoints a different work to be done in summer from that which he had ordered in winter. He who rises in the morning, after resting by night, is not supposed to have changed the plan of his life. The schoolmaster gives to the adult different tasks from those which he was accustomed to prescribe to the scholar in his boyhood; his teaching, consistent throughout, changes the instruction when the lesson is changed, without itself being changed.

3. The eminent physician of our own times, Vindicianus, being consulted by an invalid, prescribed for his disease what seemed to him a suitable remedy at that time; health was restored by its use. Some years afterwards, finding himself troubled again with the same disorder, the patient supposed that the same remedy should be applied; but its application made his illness worse. In astonishment, he again returns to the physician, and tells him what had happened; whereupon he, being a man of very quick penetration, answered: "The

[1] Letter CXXXVI. sec. 2, p. 175.

[2] Augustine's four stages of human life are: *Pueritia, adolescentia, juventus, senectus.*

reason of your having been harmed by this application is, that I did not order it;" upon which all who heard the remark and did not know the man supposed that he was trusting not in the art of medicine, but in some forbidden supernatural power. When he was afterwards questioned by some who were amazed at his words, he explained what they had not understood, namely, that he would not have prescribed the same remedy to the patient at the age which he had now attained. While, therefore, the principle and methods of art remain unchanged, the change which, in accordance with them, may be made necessary by the difference of times is very great.

4. To say, then, that what has once been done rightly must in no respect whatever be changed, is to affirm what is not true. For if the circumstances of time which occasioned anything be changed, true reason in almost all cases demands that what had been in the former circumstances rightly done, be now so altered that, although they say that it is not rightly done if it be changed, truth, on the contrary, protests that it is not rightly done unless it be changed; because, at both times, it will be rightly done if the difference be regulated according to the difference in the times. For just as in the cases of different persons it may happen that, at the same moment, one man may do with impunity what another man may not, because of a difference not in the thing done but in the person who does it, so in the case of one and the same person at different times, that which was duty formerly is not duty now, not because the person is different from his former self, but because the time at which he does it is different.

5. The wide range opened up by this question may be seen by any one who is competent and careful to observe the contrast between the beautiful and the suitable, examples of which are scattered, we may say, throughout the universe. For the beautiful, to which the ugly and deformed is opposed, is estimated and praised according to what it is in itself. But the suitable, to which the incongruous is opposed, depends on something else to which it is bound, and is estimated not according to what it is in itself, but according to that with which it is connected: the contrast, also, between becoming

and unbecoming is either the same, or at least regarded as the same. Now apply what we have said to the subject in hand. The divine institution of sacrifice was suitable in the former dispensation, but is not suitable now. For the change suitable to the present age has been enjoined by God, who knows infinitely better than man what is fitting for every age, and who is, whether He give or add, abolish or curtail, increase or diminish, the unchangeable Governor as He is the unchangeable Creator of mutable things, ordering all events in His providence until the beauty of the completed course of time, the component parts of which are the dispensations adapted to each successive age, shall be finished, like the grand melody of some ineffably wise master of song, and those pass into the eternal immediate contemplation of God who here, though it is a time of faith, not of sight, are acceptably worshipping Him.

6. They are mistaken, moreover, who think that God appoints these ordinances for His own advantage or pleasure; and no wonder that, being thus mistaken, they are perplexed, as if it was from a changing mood that He ordered one thing to be offered to Him in a former age, and something else now. But this is not the case. God enjoins nothing for His own advantage, but for the benefit of those to whom the injunction is given. Wherefore He is truly Lord, for He does not need His servants, but His servants stand in need of Him. In those same Old Testament Scriptures, and in the age in which sacrifices were still being offered that are now abrogated, it is said: "I said unto the Lord, Thou art my God, for Thou dost not need my good things."[1] Wherefore God did not stand in need of those sacrifices, nor does He ever need anything; but there are certain acts, symbolical of these divine gifts, whereby the soul receives either present grace or eternal glory, in the celebration and practice of which, pious exercises, serviceable not to God but to ourselves, are performed.

7. It would, however, take too long to discuss with adequate fulness the differences between the symbolical actions of former and present times, which, because of their pertaining

[1] Ps. xvi. 2. ὅτι τῶν ἀγαθῶν μου οὐ χρείαν ἔχεις, LXX.; quoniam bonorum meorum non eges, Aug.

to divine things, are called sacraments.[1] For as the man is not fickle who does one thing in the morning and another in the evening, one thing this month and another in the next, one thing this year and another next year, so there is no variableness with God, though in the former period of the world's history He enjoined one kind of offerings, and in the latter period another, therein ordering the symbolical actions pertaining to the blessed doctrine of true religion in harmony with the changes of successive epochs without any change in Himself. For in order to let those whom these things perplex understand that the change was already in the divine counsel, and that, when the new ordinances were appointed, it was not because the old had suddenly lost the divine approbation through inconstancy in His will, but that this had been already fixed and determined by the wisdom of that God to whom, in reference to much greater changes, these words are spoken in Scripture: "Thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed; but Thou art the same,"[2]—it is necessary to convince them that this exchange of the sacraments of the Old Testament for those of the New had been predicted by the voices of the prophets. For thus they will see, if they can see anything, that what is new in time is not new in relation to Him who has appointed the times, and who possesses, without succession of time, all those things which He assigns according to their variety to the several ages. For in the psalm from which I have quoted above the words: "I said unto the Lord, Thou art my God, for Thou dost not need my good things," in proof that God does not need our sacrifices, it is added shortly after by the Psalmist in Christ's name: "I will not gather their assemblies of blood;"[3] that is, for the offering of animals from their flocks, for which the Jewish assemblies were wont to be gathered together; and in another place he says: "I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goat from thy folds;"[4] and another prophet says: "Behold,

[1] Observe Augustine's definition of the word *sacramentum* as used by him: "cum ad res divinas pertinent sacramenta appellantur."

[2] Ps. cii. 26, 27.

[3] Ps. xvi. 3. *οὐ μὴ συναγάγω τὰς συναγωγὰς αὐτων ἐξ αἱμάτων*, LXX.

[4] Ps. l. 9.

the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt."[1] There are, besides these, many other testimonies on this subject in which it was foretold that God would do as He has done; but it would take too long to mention them.

8. If it is now established that that which was for one age rightly ordained may be in another age rightly changed,—the alteration indicating a change in the work, not in the plan, of Him who makes the change, the plan being framed by His reasoning faculty, to which, unconditioned by succession in time, those things are simultaneously present which cannot be actually done at the same time because the ages succeed each other,—one might perhaps at this point expect to hear from me the causes of the change in question. You know how long it would take to discuss these fully. The matter may be stated summarily, but sufficiently for a man of shrewd judgment, in these words: It was fitting that Christ's future coming should be foretold by some sacraments, and that after His coming other sacraments should proclaim this; just as the difference in the facts has compelled us to change the words used by us in speaking of the advent as future or past: to be foretold is one thing, to be proclaimed is another, and to be about to come is one thing, to have come is another.

CHAP. II. 9. Let us now observe, in the second place, what follows in your letter.[2] You have added that they said that the Christian doctrine and preaching were in no way consistent with the duties and rights of citizens, because among its precepts we find: "Recompense to no man evil for evil,"[3] and, "Whosoever shall smite thee on one cheek, turn to him the other also; and if any man take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also; and whosoever will compel thee to go a mile with him, go with him twain,"[4]—all which are affirmed to be contrary to the duties and rights of citizens; for who would submit to have anything taken from him by an enemy,

[1] Jer. xxxi. 32.
[2] Letter CXXXVI. sec. 2, p. 175.
[3] Rom. xii. 17.
[4] Matt. v. 39-41.

or forbear from retaliating the evils of war upon an invader who ravaged a Roman province? To these and similar statements of persons speaking slightingly, or perhaps I should rather say speaking as inquirers regarding the truth, I might have given a more elaborate answer, were it not that the persons with whom the discussion is carried on are men of liberal education. In addressing such, why should we prolong the debate, and not rather begin by inquiring for ourselves how it was possible that the Republic of Rome was governed and aggrandized from insignificance and poverty to greatness and opulence by men who, when they had suffered wrong, would rather pardon than punish the offender;[1] or how Cicero, addressing Cæsar, the greatest statesman of his time, said, in praising his character, that he was wont to forget nothing but the wrongs which were done to him?[2] For in this Cicero spoke either praise or flattery: if he spoke praise, it was because he knew Cæsar to be such as he affirmed; if he spoke flattery, he showed that the chief magistrate of a commonwealth ought to do such things as he falsely commended in Cæsar. But what is "not rendering evil for evil," but refraining from the passion of revenge—in other words, choosing, when one has suffered wrong, to pardon rather than to punish the offender, and to forget nothing but the wrongs done to us?

10. When these things are read in their own authors, they are received with loud applause; they are regarded as the record and recommendation of virtues in the practice of which the Republic deserved to hold sway over so many nations, because its citizens preferred to pardon rather than punish those who wronged them. But when the precept, "Render to no man evil for evil," is read as given by divine authority, and when, from the pulpits in our churches, this wholesome counsel is published in the midst of our congregations, or, as we might say, in places of instruction open to all, of both sexes and of all ages and ranks, our religion is accused as an enemy to the Republic! Yet, were our religion listened to as

[1] "Accepta injuria ignoscere quam persequi malebant."—Sallust, *Catilina*, c. 9.

[2] "Oblivisci soles nihil nisi injurias."—Cicero, *pro Ligario*, c. 12.

it deserves, it would establish, consecrate, strengthen, and enlarge the commonwealth in a way beyond all that Romulus, Numa, Brutus, and all the other men of renown in Roman history achieved. For what is a republic but a commonwealth? Therefore its interests are common to all; they are the interests of the State. Now what is a State but a multitude of men bound together by some bond of concord? In one of their own authors we read: "What was a scattered and unsettled multitude had by concord become in a short time a State." But what exhortations to concord have they ever appointed to be read in their temples? So far from this, they were unhappily compelled to devise how they might worship without giving offence to any of their gods, who were all at such variance among themselves, that, had their worshippers imitated their quarrelling, the State must have fallen to pieces for want of the bond of concord, as it soon afterwards began to do through civil wars, when the morals of the people were changed and corrupted.

11. But who, even though he be a stranger to our religion, is so deaf as not to know how many precepts enjoining concord, not invented by the discussions of men, but written with the authority of God, are continually read in the churches of Christ? For this is the tendency even of those precepts which they are much more willing to debate than to follow: "That to him who smites us on one cheek we should offer the other to be smitten; to him who would take away our coat we should give our cloak also; and that with him who compels us to go one mile we should go twain." For these things are done only that a wicked man may be overcome by kindness, or rather that the evil which is in the wicked man may be overcome by good, and that the man may be delivered from the evil—not from any evil that is external and foreign to himself, but from that which is within and is his own, under which he suffers loss more severe and fatal than could be inflicted by the cruelty of any enemy from without. He, therefore, who is overcoming evil by good, submits patiently to the loss of temporal advantages, that he may show how those things, through excessive love of which the other is made wicked, deserve to be despised when compared with

faith and righteousness; in order that so the injurious person may learn from him whom he wronged what is the true nature of the things for the sake of which he committed the wrong, and may be won back with sorrow for his sin to that concord, than which nothing is more serviceable to the State, being overcome not by the strength of one passionately resenting, but by the good-nature of one patiently bearing wrong. For then it is rightly done when it seems that it will benefit him for whose sake it is done, by producing in him amendment of his ways and concord with others. At all events, it is to be done with this intention, even though the result may be different from what was expected, and the man, with a view to whose correction and conciliation this healing and salutary medicine, so to speak, was employed, refuses to be corrected and reconciled.

12. Moreover, if we pay attention to the words of the precept, and consider ourselves under bondage to the literal interpretation, the right cheek is not to be presented by us if the left has been smitten. "Whosoever," it is said, "shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also;"[1] but the left cheek is more liable to be smitten, because it is easier for the right hand of the assailant to smite it than the other. But the words are commonly understood as if our Lord had said: If any one has acted injuriously to thee in respect of the higher possessions which thou hast, offer to him also the inferior possessions, lest, being more concerned about revenge than about forbearance, thou shouldst despise eternal things in comparison with temporal things, whereas temporal things ought to be despised in comparison with eternal things, as the left is in comparison with the right.[2] This has been always the aim of the holy martyrs; for final vengeance is righteously demanded only when there remains no room for amendment, namely, in the last great judgment. But meanwhile we must be on our guard, lest, through desire for revenge, we lose patience itself,—a virtue which is of more value than all which an enemy can, in spite of our resistance, take away from us. For another evangelist, in recording the same precept, makes no mention of the right cheek, but names merely the one and the other;[3] so that, while the duty may be

[1] Matt. v. 39. [2] Compare vol. viii. p. 48. [3] Luke vi. 29.

somewhat more distinctly learned from Matthew's gospel, he simply commends the same exercise of patience. Wherefore a righteous and pious man ought to be prepared to endure with patience injury from those whom he desires to make good, so that the number of good men may be increased, instead of himself being added, by retaliation of injury, to the number of wicked men.

13. In fine, that these precepts pertain rather to the inward disposition of the heart than to the actions which are done in the sight of men, requiring us, in the inmost heart, to cherish patience along with benevolence, but in the outward action to do that which seems most likely to benefit those whose good we ought to seek, is manifest from the fact that our Lord Jesus Himself, our perfect example of patience, when He was smitten on the face, answered: "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil, but if not, why smitest thou me?"[1] If we look only to the words, He did not in this obey His own precept, for He did not present the other side of his face to him who had smitten Him, but, on the contrary, prevented him who had done the wrong from adding thereto; and yet He had come prepared not only to be smitten on the face, but even to be slain upon the cross for those at whose hands He suffered crucifixion, and for whom, when hanging on the cross, He prayed, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do!"[2] In like manner, the Apostle Paul seems to have failed to obey the precept of his Lord and Master, when he, being smitten on the face as He had been, said to the chief priest: "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall, for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" And when it was said by them that stood near, "Revilest thou God's high priest?" he took pains sarcastically to indicate what his words meant, that those of them who were discerning might understand that now the whited wall, *i.e.* the hypocrisy of the Jewish priesthood, was appointed to be thrown down by the coming of Christ; for He said: "I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest, for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people;"[3] although it is perfectly certain that he

[1] John xviii. 23. [2] Luke xxiii. 34. [3] Acts xxiii. 3–5.

who had grown up in that nation, and had been in that place trained in the law, could not but know that his judge was the chief priest, and could not, by professing ignorance on this point, impose upon those to whom he was so well known.

14. These precepts concerning patience ought to be always retained in the habitual discipline of the heart, and the benevolence which prevents the recompensing of evil for evil must be always fully cherished in the disposition. At the same time, many things must be done in correcting with a certain benevolent severity, even against their own wishes, men whose welfare rather than their wishes it is our duty to consult; and the Christian Scriptures have most unambiguously commended this virtue in a magistrate. For in the correction of a son, even with some sternness, there is assuredly no diminution of a father's love; yet, in the correction, that is done which is received with reluctance and pain by one whom it seems necessary to heal by pain. And on this principle, if the commonwealth observe the precepts of the Christian religion, even its wars themselves will not be carried on without the benevolent design that, after the resisting nations have been conquered, provision may be more easily made for enjoying in peace the mutual bond of piety and justice. For the person from whom is taken away the freedom which he abuses in doing wrong is vanquished with benefit to himself; since nothing is more truly a misfortune than that good fortune of offenders, by which pernicious impunity is maintained, and the evil disposition, like an enemy within the man, is strengthened. But the perverse and froward hearts of men think human affairs are prosperous when men are concerned about magnificent mansions, and indifferent to the ruin of souls; when mighty theatres are built up, and the foundations of virtue are undermined; when the madness of extravagance is highly esteemed, and works of mercy are scorned; when, out of the wealth and affluence of rich men, luxurious provision is made for actors, and the poor are grudged the necessaries of life; when that God who, by the public declarations of His doctrine, protests against public vice, is blasphemed by impious communities, which demand gods of such character that even those theatrical representa-

tions which bring disgrace to both body and soul are fitly performed in honour of them. If God permit these things to prevail, He is in that permission showing more grievous displeasure: if He leave these crimes unpunished, such impunity is a more terrible judgment. When, on the other hand, He overthrows the props of vice, and reduces to poverty those lusts which were nursed by plenty, He afflicts in mercy. And in mercy, also, if such a thing were possible, even wars might be waged by the good, in order that, by bringing under the yoke the unbridled lusts of men, those vices might be abolished which ought, under a just government, to be either extirpated or suppressed.

15. For if the Christian religion condemned wars of every kind, the command given in the gospel to soldiers asking counsel as to salvation would rather be to cast away their arms, and withdraw themselves wholly from military service; whereas the word spoken to such was, "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages,"[1]—the command to be content with their wages manifestly implying no prohibition to continue in the service. Wherefore, let those who say that the doctrine of Christ is incompatible with the State's well-being, give us an army composed of soldiers such as the doctrine of Christ requires them to be; let them give us such subjects, such husbands and wives, such parents and children, such masters and servants, such kings, such judges—in fine, even such tax-payers and tax-gatherers, as the Christian religion has taught that men should be, and then let them dare to say that it is adverse to the State's well-being; yea, rather, let them no longer hesitate to confess that this doctrine, if it were obeyed, would be the salvation of the commonwealth.

Chap. III. 16. But what am I to answer to the assertion made that many calamities have befallen the Roman Empire through some Christian emperors? This sweeping accusation is a calumny. For if they would more clearly quote some indisputable facts in support of it from the history of past emperors, I also could mention similar, perhaps even greater calamities in the reigns of other emperors who

[1] Luke iii. 14.

were not Christians; so that men may understand that these were either faults in the men, not in their religion, or were due not to the emperors themselves, but to others without whom emperors can do nothing. As to the date of the commencement of the downfall of the Roman Republic, there is ample evidence; their own literature speaks plainly as to this. Long before the name of Christ had shone abroad on the earth, this was said of Rome: "O venal city, and doomed to perish speedily, if only it could find a purchaser!"[1] In his book on the Catilinarian conspiracy, which was before the coming of Christ, the same most illustrious Roman historian declares plainly the time when the army of the Roman people began to be wanton and drunken; to set a high value on statues, paintings, and embossed vases; to take these by violence both from individuals and from the State; to rob temples and pollute everything, sacred and profane. When, therefore, the avarice and grasping violence of the corrupt and abandoned manners of the time spared neither men nor those whom they esteemed as gods, the famous honour and safety of the commonwealth began to decline. What progress the worst vices made from that time forward, and with how great mischief to the interests of mankind the wickedness of the Empire went on, it would take too long to rehearse. Let them hear their own satirist speaking playfully yet truly thus:—

"Once poor, and therefore chaste, in former times
Our matrons were: no luxury found room
In low-roofed houses and bare walls of loam;
Their hands with labour burdened while 'tis light,
A frugal sleep supplied the quiet night;
While, pinched with want, their hunger held them strait,
When Hannibal was hovering at the gate;
But wanton now, and lolling at our ease,
We suffer all the inveterate ills of peace
And wasteful riot, whose destructive charms
Revenge the vanquished world of our victorious arms.
No crime, no lustful postures are unknown,
Since poverty, our guardian-god, is gone."[2]

[1] Sallust, *Bell. Jugurth.*
[2] Juvenal, vi. 277–295 (Dryden's translation).

Why, then, do you expect me to multiply examples of the evils which were brought in by wickedness uplifted by prosperity, seeing that among themselves, those who observed events with somewhat closer attention discerned that Rome had more reason to regret the departure of its poverty than of its opulence; because in its poverty the integrity of its virtue was secured, but through its opulence, dire corruption, more terrible than any invader, had taken violent possession not of the walls of the city, but of the mind of the State?

17. Thanks be unto the Lord our God, who has sent unto us unprecedented help in resisting these evils. For whither might not men have been carried away by that flood of the appalling wickedness of the human race, whom would it have spared, and in what depths would it not have engulfed its victims, had not the cross of Christ, resting on such a solid rock of authority (so to speak), been planted too high and too strong for the flood to sweep it away? so that by laying hold of its strength we may become stedfast, and not be carried off our feet and overwhelmed in the mighty whirlpool of the evil counsels and evil impulses of this world. For when the empire was sinking in the vile abyss of utterly depraved manners, and of the effete ancient religion, it was signally important that heavenly authority should come to the rescue, persuading men to the practice of voluntary poverty, continence, benevolence, justice, and concord among themselves, as well as true piety towards God, and all the other bright and sterling virtues of life,—not only with a view to the spending of this present life in the most honourable way, nor only with a view to secure the most perfect bond of concord in the earthly commonwealth, but also in order to the obtaining of eternal salvation, and a place in the divine and celestial republic of a people which shall endure for ever—a republic to the citizenship of which faith, hope, and charity admit us; so that, while absent from it on our pilgrimage here, we may patiently tolerate, if we cannot correct, those who desire, by leaving vices unpunished, to give stability to that republic which the early Romans founded and enlarged by their virtues, when, though they had not the true piety towards

the true God which could bring them, by a religion of saving power, to the commonwealth which is eternal, they did nevertheless observe a certain integrity of its own kind, which might suffice for founding, enlarging, and preserving an earthly commonwealth. For in the most opulent and illustrious Empire of Rome, God has shown how great is the influence of even civil virtues without true religion, in order that it might be understood that, when this is added to such virtues, men are made citizens of another commonwealth, of which the king is Truth, the law is Love, and the duration is Eternity.

CHAP. IV. 18. Who can help feeling that there is something simply ridiculous in their attempt to compare with Christ, or rather to put in a higher place, Apollonius and Apuleius, and others who were most skilful in magical arts? Yet this is to be tolerated with less impatience, because they bring into comparison with Him these men rather than their own gods; for Apollonius was, as we must admit, a much worthier character than that author and perpetrator of innumerable gross acts of immorality whom they call Jupiter. "These legends about our gods," they reply, "are fables." Why, then, do they go on praising that luxurious, licentious, and manifestly profane prosperity of the Republic, which invented these infamous crimes of the gods, and not only left them to reach the ears of men as fables, but also exhibited them to the eyes of men in the theatres; in which, more numerous than their deities were the crimes which the gods themselves were well pleased to see openly perpetrated in their honour, whereas they should have punished their worshippers for even tolerating such spectacles? "But," they reply, "those are not the gods themselves whose worship is celebrated according to the lying invention of such fables." Who, then, are they who are propitiated by the practising in worship of such abominations? Because, forsooth, Christianity has exposed the perversity and chicanery of those devils, by whose power also magical arts deceive the minds of men, and because it has made this patent to the world, and, having brought out the distinction between the holy angels and these malignant adversaries, has warned men to be on their guard against them, showing them also how this may be done,—it is called

an enemy to the Republic, as if, even though temporal prosperity could be secured by their aid, any amount of adversity would not be preferable to the prosperity obtained through such means. And yet it pleased God to prevent men from being perplexed in this matter; for in the age of the comparative darkness of the Old Testament, in which is the covering of the New Testament, He distinguished the first nation which worshipped the true God and despised false gods by such remarkable prosperity in this world, that any one may perceive from their case that prosperity is not at the disposal of devils, but only of Him whom angels serve and devils fear.

19. Apuleius (of whom I choose rather to speak, because, as our own countryman, he is better known to us Africans), though born in a place of some note,[1] and a man of superior education and great eloquence, never succeeded, with all his magical arts, in reaching, I do not say the supreme power, but even any subordinate office as a magistrate in the Empire. Does it seem probable that he, as a philosopher, voluntarily despised these things, who, being the priest of a province, was so ambitious of greatness that he gave spectacles of gladiatorial combats, provided the dresses worn by those who fought with wild beasts in the circus, and, in order to get a statue of himself erected in the town of Coea, the birthplace of his wife, appealed to law against the opposition made by some of the citizens to the proposal, and then, to prevent this from being forgotten by posterity, published the speech delivered by him on that occasion? So far, therefore, as concerns worldly prosperity, that magician did his utmost in order to success; whence it is manifest that he failed not because he was not wishful, but because he was not able to do more. At the same time we admit that he defended himself with brilliant eloquence against some who imputed to him the crime of practising magical arts; which makes me wonder at his panegyrists, who, in affirming that by these arts he wrought some miracles, attempt to bring evidence contradicting his own defence of himself from the charge. Let them, however, examine whether, indeed, they are bring-

[1] Madaura.

ing true testimony, and he was guilty of pleading what he knew to be false. Those who pursue magical arts only with a view to worldly prosperity or from an accursed curiosity, and those also who, though innocent of such arts, nevertheless praise them with a dangerous admiration, I would exhort to give heed, if they be wise, and to observe how, without any such arts, the position of a shepherd was exchanged for the dignity of the kingly office by David, of whom Scripture has faithfully recorded both the sinful and the meritorious actions, in order that we might know both how to avoid offending God, and how, when He has been offended, His wrath may be appeased.

20. As to those miracles, however, which are performed in order to excite the wonder of men, they do greatly err who compare heathen magicians with the holy prophets, who completely eclipse them by the fame of their great miracles. How much more do they err if they compare them with Christ, of whom the prophets, so incomparably superior to magicians of every name, foretold that He would come both in the human nature, which he took in being born of the Virgin, and in the divine nature, in which He is never separated from the Father!

I see that I have written a very long letter, and yet have not said all concerning Christ which might meet the case either of those who from sluggishness of intellect are unable to comprehend divine things, or of those who, though endowed with acuteness, are kept back from discerning truth through their love of contradiction and the prepossession of their minds in favour of long-cherished error. Howbeit, take note of anything which influences them against our doctrine, and write to me again, so that, if the Lord help us, we may, by letters or by treatises, furnish an answer to all their objections. May you, by the grace and mercy of the Lord, be happy in Him, my noble and justly distinguished lord, my son dearly beloved and longed for!

LETTER CXXXIX.

(A.D. 412.)

TO MARCELLINUS, MY LORD JUSTLY DISTINGUISHED, MY SON VERY MUCH BELOVED AND LONGED FOR, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. THE Acts[1] which your Excellency promised to send I am eagerly expecting, and I am longing to have them read as soon as possible in the church at Hippo, and also, if it can be done, in all the churches established within the diocese, that all may hear and become thoroughly familiar with the men who have confessed their crimes, not because the fear of God subdued them to repentance, but because the rigour of their judges broke through the hardness of their most cruel hearts, —some of them confessing to the murder of one presbyter [Restitutus], and the blinding and maiming of another [Innocentius]; others not daring to deny that they might have known of these outrages, although they say that they disapproved of them, and persisting in the impiety of schism in fellowship with such a multitude of atrocious villains, while deserting the peace of the Catholic Church on the pretext of unwillingness to be polluted by other men's crimes; others declaring that they will not forsake the schismatics, even though the certainty of Catholic truth and the perversity of the Donatists have been demonstrated to them. The work, which it has pleased God to entrust to your diligence, is of great importance. My heart's desire is, that many similar Donatist cases may be tried and decided by you as these have been, and that in this way the crimes and the insane obstinacy of these men may be often brought to light; and that the Acts recording these proceedings may be published, and brought to the knowledge of all men.

As to the statement in your Excellency's letter, that you are uncertain whether you ought to command the said Acts to be published in Theoprepia,[2] my reply is, Let this be done, if a large multitude of hearers can be gathered there; if this be

[1] Gesta—records of judicial procedure.

[2] This is supposed to be the name of a Donatist church in Carthage.

not the case, some other place of more general resort must be provided; it must not, however, be omitted on any account.

2. As to the punishment of these men, I beseech you to make it something less severe than sentence of death, although they have, by their own confession, been guilty of such grievous crimes. I ask this out of a regard both for our own consciences and for the testimony thereby given to Catholic clemency. For this is the special advantage secured to us by their confession, that the Catholic Church has found an opportunity of maintaining and exhibiting forbearance towards her most violent enemies; since in a case where such cruelty was practised, any punishment short of death will be seen by all men to proceed from great leniency. And although such treatment appears to some of our communion, whose minds are agitated by these atrocities, to be less than the crimes deserve, and to have somewhat the aspect of weakness and dereliction of duty, nevertheless, when the feelings, which are wont to be immoderately excited while such events are recent, have subsided after a time, the kindness shown to the guilty will shine with most conspicuous brightness, and men will take much more pleasure in reading these Acts and showing them to others, my lord justly distinguished, and son very much beloved and longed for.

My holy brother and co-bishop Boniface is on the spot, and I have forwarded by the deacon Peregrinus, who travelled along with him, a letter of instructions; accept these as representing me. And whatever may seem in your joint opinion to be for the Church's interest, let it be done with the help of the Lord, who is able in the midst of so great evils graciously to succour you. One of their bishops, Macrobius, is at present going round in all directions, followed by bands of wretched men and women, and has opened for himself the [Donatist] churches which fear, however slight, had moved their owners to close for a time. By the presence, however, of one whom I have commended and again heartily commend to your love, namely, Spondeus, the deputy of the illustrious Celer, their presumption was indeed somewhat checked; but now, since his departure to Carthage, Macrobius has opened the Donatist churches even within his property,

and is gathering congregations for worship in them. In his company, moreover, is Donatus, a deacon, rebaptized by them even when he was a tenant of lands belonging to the Church, who was implicated as a ringleader in the outrage [on Innocentius]. When this man is his associate, who can tell what kind of followers may be in his retinue? If the sentence on these men is to be pronounced by the Proconsul,[1] or by both of you together, and if he perchance insist upon inflicting capital punishment, although he is a Christian and, so far as we have had opportunity of observing, not disposed to such severity—if, I say, his determination make it necessary, order those letters of mine, which I deemed it my duty to address to you severally on this subject,[2] to be brought before you while the trial is still going on; for I am accustomed to hear that it is in the power of the judge to mitigate the sentence, and inflict a milder penalty than the law prescribes. If, however, notwithstanding these letters from me, he refuse to grant this request, let him at least allow that the men be remanded for a time; and we will endeavour to obtain this concession from the clemency of the Emperors, so that the sufferings of the martyrs, which ought to shed bright glory on the Church, may not be tarnished by the blood of their enemies; for I know that in the case of the clergy in the valley of Anaunia,[3] who were slain by the Pagans, and are now honoured as martyrs, the Emperor granted readily a petition that the murderers, who had been discovered and imprisoned, might not be visited with a capital punishment.

3. As to the books concerning the baptism of infants, of which I had sent the original manuscript to your Excellency, I have forgotten for what reason I received them again from you; unless, perhaps, it was that, after examining them, I found them faulty, and wished to make some corrections, which, by reason of extraordinary hindrances, I have not yet been able to overtake. I must also confess that the letter

[1] Apringius. See note, p. 171.

[2] Letters CXXXIII. and CXXXIV.

[3] Anaunia, a valley not far from Trent, destined to be so famous for the Council held there. In the month of May, 397 A.D., Martyrius, Sisinnius, and Alexander were killed there by the heathen.

intended to be addressed to you and added to these books, and which I had begun to dictate when I was with you, is still unfinished, little having been added to it since that time. If, however, I could set before you a statement of the toil which it is absolutely necessary for me to devote, both by day and by night, to other duties, you would deeply sympathize with me, and would be astonished at the amount of business not admitting of delay which distracts my mind and hinders me from accomplishing those things to which you urge me in entreaties and admonitions, addressed to one most willing to oblige you, and inexpressibly grieved that it is beyond his power; for when I obtain a little leisure from the urgent necessary business of those men, who so press me into their service[1] that I am neither able to escape them nor at liberty to neglect them, there are always subjects to which I must, in dictating to my amanuenses, give the first place, because they are so connected with the present hour as not to admit of being postponed. Of such things one instance was the abridgement of the proceedings at our Conference,[2] a work involving much labour, but necessary, because I saw that no one would attempt the perusal of such a mass of writing; another was a letter to the Donatist laity[3] concerning the said Conference, a document which I have just completed, after labouring at it for several nights; another was the composition of two long letters,[4] one addressed to yourself, my beloved friend, the other to the illustrious Volusianus, which I suppose you both have received; another is a book, with which I am occupied at present, addressed to our friend Honoratus,[5] in regard to five questions proposed by him in a letter to me, and you see that to him I was unquestionably in duty bound to send a prompt reply. For love deals with her sons as a nurse does with children, devoting her attention to them not in the order of the love felt for each, but according to the urgency of each case; she gives a preference to the weaker, because she desires to impart to them such

[1] Angariant. See Matt. v. 41.

[2] The Conference presided over by this Marcellinus at Carthage, in the preceding year.

[3] Letter CXLI. [4] Letters CXXXVII. and CXXXVIII. [5] Letter CXL.

strength as is possessed by the stronger, whom she passes by meanwhile not because of her slighting them, but because her mind is at rest in regard to them. Emergencies of this kind, compelling me to employ my amanuenses in writing on subjects which prevent me from using their pens in work much more congenial to the ardent desires of my heart, can never fail to occur, because I have difficulty in obtaining even a very little leisure, amidst the accumulation of business into which, in spite of my own inclinations, I am dragged by other men's wishes or necessities; and what I am to do, I really do not know.

4. You have heard the burdens, for my deliverance from which I wish you to join your prayers with mine; but at the same time I do not wish you to desist from admonishing me, as you do, with such importunity and frequency; your words are not without some effect. I commend at the same time to your Excellency a church planted in Numidia, on behalf of which, in its present necessities, my holy brother and co-bishop Delphinus has been sent by my brethren and co-bishops who share the toils and the dangers of their work in that region. I write no more on this matter, because you will hear all from his own lips when he comes to you. All other necessary particulars you will find in the letters of instruction, which are sent by me to the presbyter either now or by the deacon Peregrinus, so that I need not again repeat them.

May your heart be ever strong in Christ, my lord justly distinguished, and son very much beloved and longed for!

I commend to your Excellency our son Ruffinus, the Provost[1] of Cirta.

LETTER CXLIII.

(A.D. 412.)

TO MARCELLINUS, MY NOBLE LORD, JUSTLY DISTINGUISHED, MY SON VERY MUCH BELOVED, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. DESIRING to reply to the letter which I received from you through our holy brother, my co-bishop Boniface, I have

[1] Principalis.

sought for it, but have not found it. I have recalled to mind, however, that you asked me in that letter how the magicians of Pharaoh could, after all the water of Egypt had been turned into blood, find any with which to imitate the miracle. There are two ways in which the question is commonly answered: either that it was possible for water to have been brought from the sea, or, which is more credible, that these plagues were not inflicted on the district in which the children of Israel were; for the clear, express statements to this effect in some parts of that scriptural narrative entitle us to assume this in places where the statement is omitted.

2. In your other letter, brought to me by the presbyter Urbanus, a question is proposed, taken from a passage not in the Divine Scriptures, but in one of my own books, namely, that which I wrote on *Free Will*. On questions of this kind, however, I do not bestow much labour; because, even if the statement objected to does not admit of unanswerable vindication, it is mine only; it is not an utterance of that Author whose words it is impiety to reject, even when, through our misapprehension of their meaning, the interpretation which we put on them deserves to be rejected. I freely confess, accordingly, that I endeavour to be one of those who write because they have made some progress, and who, by means of writing, make further progress. If, therefore, through inadvertence or want of knowledge, anything has been stated by me which may with good reason be condemned, not only by others who are able to discover this, but also by myself (for if I am making progress, I ought, at least after it has been pointed out, to see it), such a mistake is not to be regarded with surprise or grief, but rather forgiven, and made the occasion of congratulating me, not, of course, on having erred, but on having renounced an error. For there is an extravagant perversity in the self-love of the man who desires other men to be in error, that the fact of his having erred may not be discovered. How much better and more profitable is it that in the points in which he has erred others should not err, so that he may be delivered from his error by their advice, or, if he refuse this, may at least have no followers in his error. For, if God permit me, as I desire, to gather together and point out, in a

work devoted to this express purpose, all the things which most justly displease me in my books, men will then see how far I am from being a partial judge in my own case.

3. As for you, however, who love me warmly, if, in opposing those by whom, whether through malice or ignorance or superior intelligence, I am censured, you maintain the position that I have nowhere in my writings made a mistake, you labour in a hopeless enterprise—you have undertaken a bad cause, in which, even if I myself were judge, you must be easily worsted; for it is no pleasure to me that my dearest friends should think me to be such as I am not, since assuredly they love not me, but instead of me another under my name, if they love not what I am, but what I am not; for in so far as they know me, or believe what is true concerning me, I am loved by them; but in so far as they ascribe to me what they do not know to be in me, they love another person, such as they suppose me to be. Cicero, the prince of Roman orators, says of some one, "He never uttered a word which he would wish to recall." This commendation, though it seems to be the highest possible, is nevertheless more likely to be true of a consummate fool than of a man perfectly wise; for it is true of idiots,[1] that the more absurd and foolish they are, and the more their opinions diverge from those universally held, the more likely are they to utter no word which they will wish to recall; for to regret an evil, or foolish, or ill-timed word is characteristic of a wise man. If, however, the words quoted are taken in a good sense, as intended to make us believe that some one was such that, by reason of his speaking all things wisely, he never uttered any word which he would wish to recall,—this we are, in accordance with sound piety, to believe rather concerning men of God, who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, than concerning the man whom Cicero commends. For my part, so far am I from this excellence, that if I have uttered no word which I would wish to recall, it must be because I resemble more the idiot than the wise man. The man whose writings are most worthy of the highest authority is he who has uttered no word, I do not say which it would be his desire, but which it would be his

[1] Quos vulgo moriones vocant.

duty to recall. Let him that has not attained to this occupy the second rank through his humility, since he cannot take the first rank through his wisdom. Since he has been unable, with all his care, to exclude every expression whose use may be justly regretted, let him acknowledge his regret for anything which, as he may now have discovered, ought not to have been said.

4. Since, therefore, the words spoken by me which I would if I could recall, are not, as my very dear friends suppose, few or none, but perhaps even more than my enemies imagine, I am not gratified by such commendation as Cicero's sentence, "He never uttered a word which he would wish to recall," but I am deeply distressed by the saying of Horace, "The word once uttered cannot be recalled."[1] This is the reason why I keep beside me, longer than you wish or patiently bear, the books which I have written on difficult and important questions on the book of Genesis and the doctrine of the Trinity, hoping that, if it be impossible to avoid having some things which may deservedly be found fault with, the number of these may at least be smaller than it might have been, if, through impatient haste, the works had been published without due deliberation; for you, as your letters indicate (our holy brother and co-bishop Florentius having written me to this effect), are urgent for the publication of these works now, in order that they may be defended in my own lifetime by myself, when, perhaps, they may begin to be assailed in some particulars, either through the cavilling of enemies or the misapprehensions of friends. You say this doubtless because you think there is nothing in them which might with justice be censured, otherwise you would not exhort me to publish the books, but rather to revise them more carefully. But I fix my eye rather on those who are true judges, sternly impartial, between whom and myself I wish, in the first place, to make sure of my ground, so that the only faults coming to be censured by them may be those which it was impossible for me to observe, though using the most diligent scrutiny.

5. Notwithstanding what I have just said, I am prepared to defend the sentence in the third book of my treatise on *Free*

[1] Nescit vox missa reverti.

Will, in which, discoursing on the rational substance, I have expressed my opinion in these words: "The soul, appointed to occupy a body inferior in nature to itself after the entrance of sin, governs its own body, not absolutely according to its free will, but only in so far as the laws of the universe permit." I bespeak the particular attention of those who think that I have here fixed and defined, as ascertained concerning the human soul, either that it comes by propagation from the parents, or that it has, through sins committed in a higher celestial life, incurred the penalty of being shut up in a corruptible body. Let them, I say, observe that the words in question have been so carefully weighed by me, that while they hold fast what I regard as certain, namely, that after the sin of the first man, all other men have been born and continue to be born in that sinful flesh, for the healing of which "the likeness of sinful flesh" [1] came in the person of the Lord, they are also so chosen as not to pronounce upon any one of those four opinions which I have in the sequel expounded and distinguished—not attempting to establish any one of them as preferable to the others, but disposing in the meantime of the matter under discussion, and reserving the consideration of these opinions, so that whichever of them may be true, praise should unhesitatingly be given to God.

6. For whether all souls are derived by propagation from the first, or are in the case of each individual specially created, or being created apart from the body are sent into it, or introduce themselves into it of their own accord, without doubt this creature endowed with reason, namely, the human soul—appointed to occupy an inferior, that is, an earthly body—after the entrance of sin, does not govern its own body absolutely according to its free will.[2] For I did not say, "after his sin," or "after he sinned," but after the entrance of sin, that whatever might afterwards, if possible, be determined by reason as to the question whether the sin was his own or the sin of the first parent of mankind, it might be perceived that in saying that "the soul, appointed, after the entrance of sin, to occupy

[1] Rom. viii. 3.

[2] The text being here obscure, we have followed the MSS., which omit the words, "interim quod constat peccatum primi hominis."

an inferior body, does not govern its body absolutely according to its own free will," I stated what is true; for "the flesh lusteth against the spirit,[1] and in this we groan, being burdened,"[2] and "the corruptible body weighs down the soul,"[3] —in short, who can enumerate all the evils arising from the infirmity of the flesh, which shall assuredly cease when "this corruptible shall have put on incorruption," so that "that which is mortal shall be swallowed up of life"?[4] In that future condition, therefore, the soul shall govern its spiritual body with absolute freedom of will; but in the meantime its freedom is not absolute, but conditioned by the laws of the universe, according to which it is fixed, that bodies having experienced birth experience death, and having grown to maturity decline in old age. For the soul of the first man did, before the entrance of sin, govern his body with perfect freedom of will, although that body was not yet spiritual, but animal; but after the entrance of sin, that is, after sin had been committed in that flesh from which sinful flesh was thenceforward to be propagated, the reasonable soul is so appointed to occupy an inferior body, that it does not govern its body with absolute freedom of will. That infant children, even before they have committed any sin of their own, are partakers of sinful flesh, is, in my opinion, proved by their requiring to have it healed in them also, by the application in their baptism of the remedy provided in Him who came in the likeness of sinful flesh. But even those who do not acquiesce in this view have no just ground for taking offence at the sentence quoted from my book; for it is certain, if I am not mistaken, that even if the infirmity be the consequence not of sin, but of nature, it was at all events only after the entrance of sin that bodies having this infirmity began to be produced; for Adam was not created thus, and he did not beget any offspring before he sinned.

7. Let my critics, therefore, seek other passages to censure, not only in my other more hastily published works, but also in these books of mine on *Free Will*. For I by no means deny that they may in this search discover opportunities of conferring a benefit on me; for if the books, having passed into so many

[1] Gal. v. 17. [2] 2 Cor. v. 4. [3] Wisd. ix. 15. [4] 1 Cor. xv. 53.

hands, cannot now be corrected, I myself may, being still alive. Those words, however, so carefully selected by me to avoid committing myself to any one of the four opinions or theories regarding the soul's origin, are liable to censure only from those who think that my hesitation as to any definite view in a matter so obscure is blameworthy; against whom I do not defend myself by saying that I think it right to pronounce no opinion whatever on the subject, seeing that I have no doubt either that the soul is immortal—not in the same sense in which God is immortal, who alone hath immortality,[1] but in a certain way peculiar to itself—or that the soul is a creature and not a part of the substance of the Creator, or as to any other thing which I regard as most certain concerning its nature. But seeing that the obscurity of this most mysterious subject, the origin of the soul, compels me to do as I have done, let them rather stretch out a friendly hand to me, confessing my ignorance, and desiring to know whatever is the truth on the subject; and let them, if they can, teach or demonstrate to me what they may either have learned by the exercise of sound reason, or have believed on indisputably plain testimony of the divine oracles. For if reason be found contradicting the authority of the Divine Scriptures, it only deceives by a semblance of truth, however acute it be, for its deductions cannot in that case be true. On the other hand, if, against the most manifest and reliable testimony of reason, anything be set up claiming to have the authority of the Holy Scriptures, he who does this does it through a misapprehension of what he has read, and is setting up against the truth not the real meaning of Scripture, which he has failed to discover, but an opinion of his own; he alleges not what he has found in the Scriptures, but what he has found in himself as their interpreter.

8. Let me give an example, to which I solicit your earnest attention. In a passage near the end of Ecclesiastes, where the author is speaking of man's dissolution through death separating the soul from the body, it is written, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."[2] A statement having the authority on which this one is based is true beyond all dis-

[1] 1 Tim vi. 16. [2] Eccles. xii. 7.

pute, and is not intended to deceive any one; yet if any one wishes to put upon it such an interpretation as may help him in attempting to support the theory of the propagation of souls, according to which all other souls are derived from that one which God gave to the first man, what is there said concerning the body under the name of "dust" (for obviously nothing else than body and soul are to be understood by "dust" and "spirit" in this passage) seems to favour his view; for he may affirm that the soul is said to return to God because of its being derived from the original stock of that soul which God gave to the first man, in the same way as the body is said to return to the dust because of its being derived from the original stock of that body which was made of dust in the first man, and therefore may argue that, from what we know perfectly as to the body, we ought to believe what is hidden from our observation as to the soul; for there is no difference of opinion as to the original stock of the body, but there is as to the original stock of the soul. In the text thus brought forward as a proof, statements are made concerning both, as if the manner of the return of each to its original was precisely similar in both,—the body, on the one hand, returning to the earth as it was, for thence was it taken when the first man was formed; the soul, on the other hand, returning to God, for He gave it when He breathed into the nostrils of the man whom He had formed the breath of life, and he became a living soul,[1] so that thenceforward the propagation of each part should go on from the corresponding part in the parent.

9. If, however, the true account of the soul's origin be, that God gives to each individual man a soul, not propagated from that first soul, but created in some other way, the statement that "the spirit returns to God who gave it" is equally consistent with this view. The two other opinions regarding the soul's origin are, then, the only ones which seem to be excluded by this text. For in the first place, as to the opinion that every man's soul is made separately within him at the time of his creation, it is supposed that, if this were the case, the soul should have been spoken of as returning, not to God who

[1] Gen. ii. 7.

gave it, but to God who made it; for the word "gave" seems to imply that that which could be given had already a separate existence. The words "returneth to God" are further insisted upon by some, who say, How could it return to a place where it had never been before? Accordingly they maintain that, if the soul is to be believed to have never been with God before, the words should have been "it goes," or "goes on," or "goes away," rather than it "returns" to God. In like manner, as to the opinion that each soul glides of its own accord into its body, it is not easy to explain how this theory is reconcilable with the statement that God gave it. The words of this scriptural passage are consequently somewhat adverse to these two opinions, namely, the one which supposes each soul to be created in its own body, and the one which supposes each soul to introduce itself into its own body spontaneously. But there is no difficulty in showing that the words are consistent with either of the other two opinions, namely, that all souls are derived by propagation from the one first created, or that, having been created and kept in readiness with God, they are given to each body as required.

10. Nevertheless, even if the theory that each soul is created in its own body may not be wholly excluded by this text, —for if its advocates affirm that God is here said to have given the spirit (or the soul) in the same way as He is said to have given us eyes, ears, hands, or other such members, which were not made elsewhere by Him, and kept in store that He might give them, *i.e.* add and join them to our bodies, but are made by Him in that body to which He is said to have given them,— I do not see what could be said in reply, unless, perchance, the opinion could be refuted, either by other passages of Scripture, or by valid reasoning. In like manner, those who think that each soul flows of its own accord into its body take the words "God gave it" in the sense in which it is said, "He gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts."[1] Only one word, therefore, remains apparently irreconcilable with the theory that each soul is made in its own body, namely, the word "returneth," in the expression "returneth to God;" for in what sense can the soul return to

[1] Rom. i. 24.

Him with whom it has not formerly been? By this one word alone are the supporters of this one of the four opinions embarrassed. And yet I do not think that this opinion ought to be held as refuted by this one word, for it may be possible to show that in the ordinary style of scriptural language it may be quite correct to use the word "return," as signifying that the spirit created by God returns to Him not because of its having been with Him before its union with the body, but because of its having received being from His creative power.

11. I have written these things in order to show that whoever is disposed to maintain and vindicate any one of these four theories of the soul's origin, must bring forward, either from the Scriptures received into ecclesiastical authority, passages which do not admit of any other interpretation,—as the statement that God made man,—or reasonings founded on premises so obviously true that to call them in question would be madness, such as the statement that none but the living are capable of knowledge or of error; for a statement like this does not require the authority of Scripture to prove its truth, as if the common sense of mankind did not of itself announce its truth with such transparent cogency of reason, that whoever contradicts it must be held to be hopelessly mad. If any one is able to produce such arguments in discussing the very obscure question of the soul's origin, let him help me in my ignorance; but if he cannot do this, let him forbear from blaming my hesitation on the question.

12. As to the virginity of the Holy Mary, if what I have written on this subject does not suffice to prove that it was possible, we must refuse to believe every record of anything miraculous having taken place in the body of any. If, however, the objection to believing this miracle is, that it happened only once, ask the friend who is still perplexed by this, whether instances may not be quoted from secular literature of events which were, like this one, unique, and which, nevertheless, are believed, not merely as fables are believed by the simple, but with that faith with which the history of facts is received—ask him, I beseech you, this question. For if he says that nothing of this kind is to be found in these writings,

he ought to have such instances pointed out to him; if he admits this, the question is decided by his admission.

LETTER CXLIV.

(A.D. 412.)

TO MY HONOURABLE AND JUSTLY ESTEEMED LORDS, THE INHABITANTS OF CIRTA, OF ALL RANKS, BRETHREN DEARLY BELOVED AND LONGED FOR, BISHOP AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING.

1. If that which greatly distressed me in your town has now been removed; if the obduracy of hearts which resisted most evident and, as we might call it, notorious truth, has by the force of truth been overcome; if the sweetness of peace is relished, and the love which tends to unity is the occasion no longer of pain to eyes diseased, but of light and vigour to eyes restored to health,—this is God's work, not ours; on no account would I ascribe these results to human efforts, even had such a remarkable conversion of your whole community taken place when I was with you, and in connection with my own preaching and exhortations. The operation and the success are His who, by His servants, calls men's attention outwardly by the signs of things, and Himself teaches men inwardly by the things themselves. The fact, however, that whatever praiseworthy change has been wrought among you is to be ascribed not to us, but to Him who alone doeth wonderful works,[1] is no reason for our being more reluctant to be persuaded to visit you. For we ought to hasten much more readily to see the works of God than our own works, for we ourselves also, if we be of service in any work, owe this not to men but to Him; wherefore the apostle says, "Neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth: but God that giveth the increase."[2]

2. You allude in your letter to a fact which I also remember from classic literature, that by discoursing on the benefits of temperance, Xenocrates suddenly converted Polemo from a dissipated to a sober life, though this man was not only habitually intemperate, but was actually intoxicated at the

[1] Ps. lxxii. 18. [2] 1 Cor. iii. 7.

time. Now although this was, as you have wisely and truthfully apprehended, a case not of conversion to God, but of emancipation from the thraldom of self-indulgence, I would not ascribe even the amount of improvement wrought in him to the work of man, but to the work of God. For even in the body, the lowest part of our nature, all excellent things, such as beauty, vigour, health, and so on, are the work of God, to whom nature owes its creation and perfection; how much more certain, therefore, must it be that no other can impart excellent properties to the soul! For what imagination of human folly could be more full of pride and ingratitude than the notion that, although God alone can give comeliness to the body, it belongs to man to give purity to the soul? It is written in the book of Christian Wisdom, "I perceived that no one can have self-restraint unless God give it to him, and that this is a part of true wisdom to know whose gift it is."[1] If, therefore, Polemo, when he exchanged a life of dissipation for a life of sobriety, had so understood whence the gift came, that, renouncing the superstitions of the heathen, he had rendered worship to the Divine Giver, he would then have become not only temperate, but truly wise and savingly religious, which would have secured to him not merely the practice of virtue in this life, but also the possession of immortality in the life to come. How much less, then, should I presume to take to myself the honour of your conversion, or of that of your people which you have now reported to me, which, when I was neither speaking to you nor even present with you, was accomplished unquestionably by divine power in all in whom it has really taken place. This, therefore, know above all things, meditate on this with devout humility. To God, my brethren, to God give thanks. Fear Him, that ye may not go backward: love Him, that you may go forward.[2]

3. If, however, love of men still keeps some secretly alienated from the flock of Christ, while fear of other men constrains them to a feigned reconciliation, I charge all such to consider that before God the conscience of man has no covering, and that they can neither impose on Him as a

[1] Wisd. viii. 21.

[2] Deum timete ne deficiatis, amate ut proficiatis.

Witness, nor escape from Him as a Judge. But if, by reason of anxiety as to their own salvation, anything as to the question of the unity of Christ's flock perplex them, let them make this demand upon themselves,—and it seems to me a most just demand,—that in regard to the Catholic Church, *i.e.* the Church spread abroad over the whole world, they believe rather the words of Divine Scripture than the calumnies of human tongues. Moreover, with respect to the schism which has arisen among men (who assuredly, whatsoever they may be, do not frustrate the promises of God to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed,"[1]—promises believed when brought to their ears as a prophecy, but denied, forsooth, when set before their eyes as an accomplished fact), let them meanwhile ponder this one very brief, but, if I mistake not, unanswerable argument: the question out of which the dispute arose either has or has not been tried before ecclesiastical tribunals beyond the sea; if it has not been tried before these, then no guilt in this matter is chargeable on the whole flock of Christ in the nations beyond the sea, in communion with which we rejoice, and therefore their separation from these guiltless communities is an act of impious schism; if, on the other hand, the question has been tried before the tribunal of these churches, who does not understand and feel, nay, who does not see, that those whose communion is now separated from these churches were the party defeated in the trial? Let them therefore choose to whom they should prefer to give credence, whether to the ecclesiastical judges who decided the question, or to the complaints of the vanquished litigants. Observe wisely how impossible it is for them reasonably to answer this brief and most intelligible dilemma; nevertheless, it were easier to turn Polemo from a life of intemperance, than to drive them out of the madness of inveterate error.

Pardon me, my noble and worthy lords, brethren most dearly beloved and longed for, for writing you a letter more prolix than agreeable, but fitted, as I think, to benefit rather than to flatter you. As to my coming to you, may God fulfil the desire which we both equally cherish! For I cannot

[1] Gen. xxvi. 4.

express in words, but I am sure you will gladly believe, with what fervour of love I burn to see you.

LETTER CXLV.

(A.D. 412 or 413.)

TO ANASTASIUS, MY HOLY AND BELOVED LORD AND BROTHER, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. A most satisfactory opportunity of saluting your genuine worth is furnished by our brethren Lupicinus and Concordialis, honourable servants of God, from whom, even without my writing, you might learn all that is going on among us here. But knowing, as I do, how much you love us in Christ, because of your knowing how warmly your love is reciprocated by us in Him, I was sure that it might have disappointed you if you had seen them, and could not but know that they had come directly from us, and were most intimately united in friendship with us, and yet had received with them no letter from me. Besides this, I am owing you a reply, for I am not aware of having written to you since I received your last letter; so great are the cares by which I am encumbered and distracted, that I know not whether I have written or not before now.

2. We desire eagerly to know how you are, and whether the Lord has given you some rest, so far as in this world He can bestow it; for "if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it;"[1] and so it is almost always our experience, that when, in the midst of our anxieties, we turn our thoughts to some of our brethren placed in a condition of comparative rest, we are in no small measure revived, as if in them we ourselves enjoyed a more peaceful and tranquil life. At the same time, when vexatious cares are multiplied in this uncertain life, they compel us to long for the everlasting rest. For this world is more dangerous to us in pleasant than in painful hours, and is to be guarded against more when it allures us to love it than when it warns and constrains us to despise it. For although "all that is in the

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 26.

world" is "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,"[1] nevertheless, even in the case of men who prefer to these the things which are spiritual, unseen, and eternal, the sweetness of earthly things insinuates itself into our affections, and accompanies our steps on the path of duty with its seductive allurements. For the violence with which present things acquire sway over our weakness is exactly proportioned to the superior value by which future things command our love. And oh that those who have learned to observe and bewail this may succeed in overcoming and escaping from this power of terrestrial things! Such victory and emancipation cannot, without God's grace, be achieved by the human will, which is by no means to be called free so long as it is subject to prevailing and enslaving lusts; "For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage."[2] And the Son of God has Himself said, "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."[3]

3. The law, therefore, by teaching and commanding what cannot be fulfilled without grace, demonstrates to man his weakness, in order that the weakness thus proved may resort to the Saviour, by whose healing the will may be able to do what in its feebleness it found impossible. So, then, the law brings us to faith, faith obtains the Spirit in fuller measure, the Spirit sheds love abroad in us, and love fulfils the law. For this reason the law is called a "schoolmaster,"[4] under whose threatenings and severity "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered."[5] "But how shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?"[6] Wherefore unto them that believe and call on Him the quickening Spirit is given, lest the letter without the Spirit should kill them.[7] But by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts,[8] so that the words of the same apostle, "Love is the fulfilling of the law,"[9] are realized. So the law is good to the man who uses it lawfully;[10] and he uses it lawfully who, under-

[1] 1 John ii. 16. [2] 2 Pet. ii. 19. [3] John viii. 36. [4] Gal. iii. 24.
[5] Joel ii. 32. [6] Rom. x. 14. [7] 2 Cor. iii. 6.
[8] Rom. v. 5. [9] Rom. xiii. 10. [10] 1 Tim. i. 8.

standing wherefore it was given, betakes himself, under the pressure of its threatenings, to grace, which sets him free. Whoever unthankfully despises this grace, by which the ungodly are justified, and trusts in his own strength, as if he thereby could fulfil the law, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish his own righteousness, is not submitting himself to the righteousness of God;[1] and thus the law becomes to him not a help to pardon, but the bond fastening his guilt to him. Not that the law is evil, but because sin worketh death in such persons by that which is good.[2] For by occasion of the commandment he sins more grievously who, by the commandment, knows how evil are the sins which he commits.

4. In vain, however, does any one think himself to have gained the victory over sin, if, through nothing but fear of punishment, he refrains from sin; because, although the outward action to which an evil desire prompts him is not performed, the evil desire itself within the man is an enemy unsubdued. And who is found innocent in God's sight who is willing to do the sin which is forbidden if you only remove the punishment which is feared? And consequently, even in the volition itself, he is guilty of sin who wishes to do what is unlawful, but refrains from doing it because it cannot be done with impunity; for, so far as he is concerned, he would prefer that there were no righteousness forbidding and punishing sins. And assuredly, if he would prefer that there should be no righteousness, who can doubt that he would if he could abolish it altogether? How, then, can that man be called righteous who is such an enemy to righteousness that, if he had the power, he would abolish its authority, that he might not be subject to its threatenings or its penalties? He, then, is an enemy to righteousness who refrains from sin only through fear of punishment; but he will become the friend of righteousness if through love of it he sin not, for then he will be really afraid to sin. For the man who only fears the flames of hell is afraid not of sinning, but of being burned; but the man who hates sin as much as he hates hell is afraid to sin. This is the "fear of the Lord,"

[1] Rom. x. 3. [2] Rom. vii. 13.

which "is pure, enduring for ever."[1] For the fear of punishment has torment, and is not in love; and love, when it is perfect, casts it out.[2]

5. Moreover, every one hates sin just in proportion as he loves righteousness; which he will be enabled to do not through the law putting him in fear by the letter of its prohibitions, but by the Spirit healing him by grace. Then that is done which the apostle enjoins in the admonition, "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness."[3] For what is the force of the conjunctions "as" and "even so," if it be not this: "As no fear compelled you to sin, but the desire for it, and the pleasure taken in sin, even so let not the fear of punishment drive you to a life of righteousness; but let the pleasure found in righteousness and the love you bear to it draw you to practise it"? And even this is, as it seems to me, a righteousness, so to speak, somewhat mature, but not perfect. For he would not have prefaced the admonition with the words, "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh," had there not been something else that ought to have been said if they had been by that time able to bear it. For surely more devoted service is due to righteousness than men are wont to yield to sin. For pain of body restrains men, if not from the desire of sin, at least from the commission of sinful actions; and we should not easily find any one who would openly commit a sin procuring to him an impure and unlawful gratification, if it was certain that the penalty of torture would immediately follow the crime. But righteousness ought to be so loved that not even bodily sufferings should hinder us from doing its works, but that, even when we are in the hands of cruel enemies, our good works should so shine before men that those who are capable of taking pleasure therein may glorify our Father who is in heaven.[4]

6. Hence it comes that that most devoted lover of righteousness exclaims, "Who shall separate us from the love of

[1] Ps. xix. 9. [2] 1 John iv. 18. [3] Rom. vi. 19. [4] Matt. v. 16.

Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."[1] Observe how he does not say simply, "Who shall separate us from Christ?" but, indicating that by which we cling to Christ, he says, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" We cling to Christ, then, by love, not by fear of punishment. Again, after having enumerated those things which seem to be sufficiently fierce, but have not sufficient force to effect a separation, he has, in the conclusion, called that the love of God which he had previously spoken of as the love of Christ. And what is this "love of Christ" but love of righteousness? for it is said of Him that He "is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."[2] As, therefore, he is superlatively wicked who is not deterred even by the penalty of bodily sufferings from the vile works of sordid pleasure, so is he superlatively righteous who is not restrained even by the fear of bodily sufferings from the holy works of most glorious love.

7. This love of God, which must be maintained by unremitting, devout meditation, "is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us,"[3] so that he who glories in it must glory in the Lord. Forasmuch, therefore, as we feel ourselves to be poor and destitute of that love by which the law is most truly fulfilled, we ought not to expect and demand its riches from our own indigence, but to ask, seek, and knock in prayer, that He with whom is "the fountain of life" "may satisfy us abundantly with the fatness of His house, and make us drink of the river of His pleasures,"[4] so

[1] Rom. viii. 35–39.
[2] 1 Cor. i. 30, 31; Jer. ix. 24.
[3] Rom. v. 5.
[4] Ps. xxxvi. 8, 9.

that, watered and revived by its full flood, we may not only escape from being swallowed up by sorrow, but may even "glory in tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed;"—not that we can do this of ourselves, but "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us."[1]

8. It has been a pleasure to me to say, at least by a letter, these things which I could not say when you were present. I write them, not in reference to yourself, for you do not affect high things, but are contented with that which is lowly,[2] but in reference to some who arrogate too much to the human will, imagining that, the law being given, the will is of its own strength sufficient to fulfil that law, though not assisted by any grace imparted by the Holy Spirit, in addition to instruction in the law; and by their reasonings they persuade the wretched and impoverished weakness of man to believe that it is not our duty to pray that we may not enter into temptation. Not that they dare openly to say this; but this is, whether they acknowledge it or not, an inevitable consequence of their doctrine.[3] For wherefore is it said to us, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation;"[4] and wherefore was it that, when He was teaching us to pray, He prescribed, in accordance with this injunction, the use of the petition "lead us not into temptation,"[5] if this be wholly in the power of the will of man, and does not require the help of divine grace in order to its accomplishment?

Why should I say more? Salute the brethren who are with you, and pray for us, that we may be saved with that salvation of which it is said, "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."[6] Pray, therefore, for us that we may be righteous,—an attainment wholly beyond a man's reach, unless he know righteousness and be willing to practise it, but one which is immediately realized when he is perfectly

[1] Rom. v. 3–5. [2] Rom. xii. 16.

[3] The heresy of Pelagius is obviously alluded to here as having begun thus early (A.D. 413) to command attention.

[4] Matt. xxvi. 41. [5] Matt. vi. 13. [6] Matt. ix. 12, 13.

willing; but this full consent of his will can never be in him unless he is healed and assisted by the grace of the Spirit.

LETTER CXLVI.

(A.D. 413.)

TO PELAGIUS, MY LORD GREATLY BELOVED, AND BROTHER GREATLY LONGED FOR, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

I THANK you very much for your consideration in making me glad by a letter from you, and informing me of your welfare. May the Lord recompense you with those blessings by the possession of which you may be good for ever, and may live eternally with Him who is eternal, my lord greatly beloved, and brother greatly longed for. Although I do not acknowledge that anything in me deserves the eulogies which the letter of your Benevolence contains concerning me, nevertheless I cannot but be grateful for the goodwill therein manifested towards one so insignificant, while suggesting at the same time that you should rather pray for me that I may be made by the Lord such as you suppose me already to be.

(*In another hand*) May you enjoy safety and the Lord's favour, and be mindful of us![1]

LETTER CXLVIII.

(A.D. 413.)

A LETTER OF INSTRUCTIONS (COMMONITORIUM) TO THE HOLY BROTHER FORTUNATIANUS.[2]

CHAP. I. 1. I write this to remind you of the request which I made when I was with you, that you would do me the kind-

[1] Pelagius made use of this letter at the Council of Diospolis, in A.D. 415, which compelled Augustine to vindicate himself in reference to it in his narrative of the proceedings of Pelagius. See *Anti-Pelagian Writings*, vol. i. p. 413.

[2] Fortunatianus, Bishop of Sicqua, was one of the seven bishops selected to represent the Catholics in the Conference at Carthage with the Donatists in 411. He was probably a neighbour of the bishop who had regarded himself as aggrieved by the arguments with which Augustine confuted some extravagant speculations of his.

ness of visiting our brother, whom we mentioned in conversation, in order to ask him to forgive me, if he has construed as a harsh and unfriendly attack upon himself any statement made by me in a recent letter (which I do not regret having written), affirming that the eyes of this body cannot see God, and never shall see Him. I added immediately the reason why I made this statement, namely, to prevent men from believing that God Himself is corporeal and visible, as occupying a place determined by size and by distance from us (for the eye of this body can see nothing except under these conditions), and to prevent men from understanding the expression "face to face"[1] as if God were limited within the members of a body. Therefore I do not regret having made this statement, as a protest against our forming such unworthy and profane ideas concerning God as to think that He is not everywhere in His totality, but susceptible of division, and distributed through localities in space; for such are the only objects cognizable through these eyes of ours.

2. But if, while holding no such opinion as this concerning God, but believing Him to be a Spirit, unchangeable, incorporeal, present in His whole Being everywhere, any one thinks that the change on this body of ours (when from being a natural body it shall become a spiritual body) will be so great that in such a body it will be possible for us to see a spiritual substance not susceptible of division according to local distance or dimension, or even confined within the limits of bodily members, but everywhere present in its totality, I wish him to instruct me in this matter, if what he has discovered is true; but if in this opinion he is mistaken, it is far less objectionable to ascribe to the body something that does not belong to it, than to take away from God that which belongs to Him. And even if that opinion be correct, it will not contradict my words in that letter; for I said that the eyes of this body shall not see God, meaning that the eyes of this body of ours can see nothing but bodies which are separated from them by some interval of space, for if there be no interval, even bodies themselves cannot through the eyes be seen by us.

3. Moreover, if our bodies shall be changed into something

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

so different from what they now are as to have eyes by means of which a substance shall be seen which is not diffused through space or confined within limits, having one part in one place, another in another, a smaller in a less space, a greater in a larger, but in its totality spiritually present everywhere,—these bodies shall be something very different from what they are at present, and shall no longer be themselves, and shall be not only freed from mortality, and corruption, and weight, but somehow or other shall be changed into the quality of the mind itself, if they shall be able to see in a manner which shall be then granted to the mind, but which is meanwhile not granted even to the mind itself. For if, when a man's habits are changed, we say he is not the man he was,—if, when our age is changed, we say that the body is not what it was, how much more may we say that the body shall not be the same when it shall have undergone so great a change as not only to have immortal life, but also to have power to see Him who is invisible? Wherefore, if they shall thus see God, it is not with the eyes of this body that He shall be seen, because in this also it shall not be the same body, since it has been changed to so great an extent in capacity and power; and this opinion is, therefore, not contrary to the words of my letter. If, however, the body shall be changed only to this extent, that whereas now it is mortal, then it shall be immortal, and whereas now it weighs down the soul, then, devoid of weight, it shall be most ready for every motion, but unchanged in the faculty of seeing objects which are discerned by their dimensions and distances, it will still be utterly impossible for it to see a substance that is incorporeal and is in its totality present everywhere. Whether, therefore, the former or the latter supposition be correct, in both cases it remains true that the eyes of this body shall not see God; or if they are to see Him, they shall not be the eyes of *this* body, since after so great a change they shall be the eyes of a body very different from this.

4. But if this brother is able to propound anything better on this subject, I am ready to learn either from himself or from his instructor. If I were saying this ironically, I would also say that I am prepared to learn concerning God that He

has a body having members, and is divisible in different localities in space; which I do not say, because I am not speaking ironically, and I am perfectly certain that God is not in any respect of such a nature; and I wrote that letter to prevent men from believing Him to be such. In that letter, being carried away by my zeal to warn against error, and writing more freely because I did not name the persons whose views I assailed, I was too vehement and not sufficiently guarded, and did not consider as I ought to have done the respect which was due by one brother and bishop to the office of another: this I do not defend, but blame; this I condemn rather than excuse, and beg that it may be forgiven. I entreat him to remember our old friendship, and forget my recent offence. Let him do that which he is displeased with me for not having done; let him exhibit in granting pardon the gentleness which I have failed to show in writing that letter. I thus ask, through your kindly mediation, what I had resolved to ask of him in person if I had had an opportunity. I indeed made an effort to obtain an interview with him (a venerable man, worthy of being honoured by us all, writing to request it in my name), but he declined to come, suspecting, I suppose, that, as very often happens among men, some plot was prepared against him. Of my absolute innocence of such guile, I beg you to do your utmost to assure him, which by seeing him personally you can more easily do. State to him with what deep and genuine grief I conversed with you about my having hurt his feelings. Let him know how far I am from slighting him, how much in him I fear God, and am mindful of our Head in whose body we are brethren. My reason for thinking it better not to go to the place in which he resides was, that we might not make ourselves a laughing-stock to those without the pale of the Church, thereby bringing grief to our friends and shame to ourselves. All this may be satisfactorily arranged through the good offices of your Holiness and Charity; nay, rather, the satisfactory issue is in the hands of Him who, by the faith which is His gift, dwells in your heart, whom I am confident that our brother does not refuse to honour in you, since he knows Christ experimentally as dwelling in himself.

5. I, at all events, do not know what I could do better in this case than ask pardon from the brother who has complained that he was wounded by the harshness of my letter. He will, I hope, do what he knows to be enjoined on him by Him who, speaking through the apostle, says: "Forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as God in Christ has forgiven you;"[1] "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us."[2] Walking in this love, let us inquire with oneness of heart, and, if possible, with yet greater diligence than hitherto, into the nature of the spiritual body which we shall have after our resurrection. "And if in anything we be diversely minded, God shall reveal even this unto us,"[3] if we abide in Him. Now he who dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, for "God is love,"[4]—whether as the fountain of love in its ineffable essence, or as the fountain whence He freely gives it to us by His Spirit. If, then, it can be shown that love can at any time become visible to our bodily eyes, then we grant that possibly God shall be so too; but if love never can become visible, much less can He who is Himself its Fountain, or whatever other figurative name more excellent or more appropriate can be employed in speaking of One so great.

CHAP. II. 6. Some men of great gifts, and very learned in the Holy Scriptures, who have, when an opportunity presented itself, done much by their writings to benefit the Church and promote the instruction of believers, have said that the invisible God is seen in an invisible manner, that is, by that nature which in us also is invisible, namely, a pure mind or heart. The holy Ambrose, when speaking of Christ as the Word, says: "Jesus is seen not by the bodily, but by the spiritual eyes;" and shortly after he adds: "The Jews saw Him not, for their foolish heart was blinded,"[5] showing in this way how Christ is seen. Also, when he was speaking of the Holy Spirit, he introduced the words of the Lord, saying: "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth;

[1] Col. iii. 13. [2] Eph. v. 1, 2. [3] Phil. iii. 15, 16.
[4] 1 John iv. 16. [5] Ambrosius, Lib. i. *in Luc.* c. i.

whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him;"[1] and adds: "With good reason, therefore, did He show Himself in the body, since in the substance of His Godhead He is not seen. We have seen the Spirit, but in a bodily form; let us see the Father also; but since we cannot see Him, let us hear Him." A little after he says: "Let us hear the Father, then, for the Father is invisible; but the Son also is invisible as regards His Godhead, for 'no man hath seen God at any time;'[2] and since the Son is God, He is certainly not seen in that in which He is God."[3]

7. The holy Jerome also says: "The eye of man cannot see God as He is in His own nature; and this is true not of man only; neither angels, nor thrones, nor powers, nor principalities, nor any name which is named can see God, for no creature can see its Creator." By these words this very learned man sufficiently shows what his opinion was on this subject in regard not only to the present life, but also to that which is to come. For however much the eyes of our body may be changed for the better, they shall only be made equal to the eyes of the angels. Here, however, Jerome has affirmed that the nature of the Creator is invisible even to the angels, and to every creature without exception in heaven. If, however, a question arise on this point, and a doubt is expressed whether we shall not be superior to the angels, the mind of the Lord Himself is plain from the words which He uses in speaking of those who shall rise again to the kingdom: "They shall be equal unto the angels."[4] Whence the same holy Jerome thus expresses himself in another passage: "Man, therefore, cannot see the face of God, but the angels of the least in the Church do always behold the face of God.[5] And now we see as in a mirror darkly, in a riddle, but then face to face;[6] when from being men we shall advance to the rank of angels, and shall be able to say with the apostle, 'We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord;'[7] although no creature can see the

[1] John xiv. 16, 17.
[2] 1 John iv. 12.
[3] Ambrosius, Lib. ii. *in Luc.* c. iii. v. 22.
[4] Luke xx. 36.
[5] Matt. xviii. 10.
[6] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.
[7] 2 Cor. iii. 18.

face of God, according to the essential properties of His nature, and He is, in these cases, seen by the mind, since He is believed to be invisible." [1]

8. In these words of this man of God there are many things deserving our consideration: first, that in accordance with the very clear declaration of the Lord, he also is of opinion that we shall then see the face of God when we shall have advanced to the rank of angels, that is, shall be made equal to the angels, which doubtless shall be at the resurrection of the dead. Next, he has sufficiently explained by the testimony of the apostle, that the face is to be understood not of the outward but of the inward man, when it is said we shall "see face to face;" for the apostle was speaking of the face of the heart when he used the words quoted in this connection by Jerome: "We, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image." [2] If any one doubt this, let him examine the passage again, and notice of what the apostle was speaking, namely, of the veil, which remains on the heart of every one in reading the Old Testament, until he pass over to Christ, that the veil may be removed. For he there says: "We also, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord,"—which face had not been unveiled in the Jews, of whom he says, "the veil is upon their heart,"—in order to show that the face unveiled in us when the veil is taken away is the face of the heart. In fine, lest any one, looking on these things with too little care and therefore failing to discern their meaning, should believe that God now is or shall hereafter be visible either to angels or to men, when they shall have been made equal to the angels, he has most plainly expressed his opinion by affirming that "no creature can see the face of God according to the essential properties of His nature," and that "He is, in these cases, seen by the mind, since He is believed to be invisible." From these statements he sufficiently showed that when God has been seen by men through the eyes of the body as if He had a body, He has not been seen as to the essential properties of His nature, in which He is seen by the mind, since He is believed to be invisible—invisible, that is to say,

[1] Hieron. lib. i. *in Isai*, i.

[2] 2 Cor. iii. 18.

to the bodily perception even of celestial beings, as Jerome had said above, of angels, and powers, and principalities. How much more, then, is He invisible to terrestrial beings!

9. Wherefore, in another place, Jerome says in still plainer terms, it is true not only of the divinity of the Father but equally of that of the Son and of that of the Holy Spirit, forming one nature in the Trinity, that it cannot be seen by the eyes of the flesh, but by the eyes of the mind, of which the Saviour Himself says: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."[1] What could be more clear than this statement? For if he had merely said that it is impossible for the divinity of the Father, or of the Son, or of the Holy Spirit, to be seen by the eyes of the flesh, and had not added the words, "but only by the eyes of the mind," it might perhaps have been said, that when the body shall have become spiritual it can no longer be called "flesh;" but by adding the words, "but only by the eyes of the mind," he has excluded the vision of God from every sort of body. Lest, however, any one should suppose that he was speaking only of the present state of being, observe that he has subjoined also a testimony of the Lord, quoted with the design of defining the eyes of the mind of which he had spoken; in which testimony a promise is given not of present, but of future vision: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they *shall* see God."

10. The very blessed Athanasius, also, Bishop of Alexandria, when contending against the Arians, who affirm that the Father alone is invisible, but suppose the Son and the Holy Spirit to be visible, asserted the equal invisibility of all the Persons of the Trinity, proving it by testimonies from Holy Scripture, and arguing with all his wonted care in controversy, labouring earnestly to convince his opponents that God has never been seen, except through His assuming the form of a creature; and that in His essential Deity God is invisible, that is, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are invisible, except in so far as the Divine Persons can be known by the mind and spirit. Gregory, also, a holy Eastern bishop, very plainly says that God, by nature invisible, had, on those

[1] Hieron. lib. iii. *in Isai*, i.

occasions on which He was seen by the fathers (as by Moses, with whom He talked face to face), made it possible for Himself to be seen by assuming the form of something material and discernible.[1] Our Ambrose says the same: "That the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, when visible, are seen under forms assumed by choice, not prescribed by the nature of Deity;"[2] thus clearing the truth of the saying, "No man hath seen God at any time,"[3] which is the word of the Lord Christ Himself, and of that other saying, "Whom no man hath seen, nor can see,"[4] which is the word of the apostle, yea, rather, of Christ by His apostle; as well as vindicating the consistency of those passages of Scripture in which God is related to have been seen, because He is both invisible in the essential nature of His Deity, and able to become visible when He pleases, by assuming such created form as shall seem good to Him.

CHAP. III. 11. Moreover, if invisibility is a property of the divine nature, as incorruptibility is, that nature shall assuredly not undergo such a change in the future world as to cease to be invisible and become visible; because it shall never be possible for it to cease to be incorruptible and become corruptible, for it is in both attributes alike immutable. The apostle assuredly declared the excellence of the divine nature when he placed these two together, saying, "Now, unto the King of ages, invisible, incorruptible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever."[5] Wherefore I dare not make such a distinction as to say incorruptible, indeed, for ever and ever, but invisible—not for ever and ever, but only in this world. At the same time, since the testimonies which we are next to quote cannot be false,—"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,"[6] and, "We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is,"[7]—we cannot deny that the sons of God shall see God; but they shall see Him as invisible things are seen, in

[1] See the 49th of the discourses published under the name of Gregory of Nazianzum. M. Dupin has shown that the discourse in question must have been the work of some Latin author.

[2] Ambrose *on Luke*, c. i. 11. [3] John i. 18. [4] 1 Tim. vi. 16.
[5] 1 Tim. i. 17. [6] Matt. v. 8. [7] 1 John iii. 2.

the manner in which He who appeared in the flesh, visible to men, promised that He would manifest Himself to men, when, speaking in the presence of the disciples and seen by their eyes, He said: "I will love him, and *will* manifest myself to him." In what other manner are invisible things seen than by the eyes of the mind, concerning which, as the instruments of our vision of God, I have shortly before quoted the opinion of Jerome?

12. Hence, also, the statement of the Bishop of Milan, whom I have quoted before, who says that even in the resurrection it is not easy for any but those who have a pure heart to see God, and therefore it is written, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." "How many," he says, "had He already enumerated as blessed, and yet to them He had not promised the power of seeing God;" and he adds this inference, "If, therefore, the pure in heart shall see God, it is obvious that others shall not see Him;" and to prevent our understanding him to refer to those others of whom the Lord had said, "Blessed are the poor, blessed are the meek," he immediately subjoined, "For those that are unworthy shall not see God," intending it to be understood that the unworthy are those who, although they shall rise again, shall not be able to see God, since they shall rise to condemnation, because they refused to purify their hearts through that true faith which "worketh by love."[1] For this reason he goes on to say, "Whosoever has been unwilling to see God cannot see Him." Then, since it occurred to him that, in a sense, even all wicked men have a desire to see God, he immediately explains that he used the words, "Whosoever has been unwilling to see God," because the fact that the wicked do not desire to purify the heart, by which alone God can be seen, shows that they do not desire to see God, and follows up this statement with the words: "God is not seen in space, but in the pure heart; nor is He sought out by the eyes of the body; nor is He defined in form by our faculty of sight; nor grasped by the touch; His voice does not fall on the ear; nor are His goings perceived by the senses."[2] By these words the blessed Ambrose desired to teach the preparation which men ought to

[1] Gal. v. 6.

[2] Ambrose *on Luke*, i. 11.

make if they wish to see God, viz. to purify the heart by the faith which worketh by love, through the gift of the Holy Spirit, from whom we have received the earnest by which we are taught to desire that vision.[1]

CHAP. IV. 13. For as to the members of God which the Scripture frequently mentions, lest any one should suppose that we resemble God as to the form and figure of the body, the same Scripture speaks of God as having also wings, which we certainly have not. As, then, when we hear of the "wings" of God, we understand the divine protection, so by the "hands" of God we ought to understand His working,—by His "feet," His presence,—by His "eyes," His power of seeing and knowing all things,— by His face, that whereby He reveals Himself to our knowledge; and I believe that any other such expression used in Scripture is to be spiritually understood. In this opinion I am not singular, nor am I the first who has stated it. It is the opinion of all who by any spiritual interpretation of such language in Scripture resist those who are called Anthropomorphites. Not to occupy too much time by quoting largely from the writings of these men, I introduce here one extract from the pious Jerome, in order that our brother may know that, if anything moves him to maintain an opposite opinion, he is bound to carry on the debate with those who preceded me not less than with myself.

14. In the exposition which that most learned student of Scripture has given of the psalm in which occur the words, "Understand, ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? or He that formed the eye, doth He not behold?"[2] he says, among other things: "This passage furnishes a strong argument against those who are Anthropomorphites, and say that God has members such as we have. For example, God is said by them to have eyes, because 'the eyes of the Lord behold all things:' in the same literal manner they take the statements that the hand of the Lord doeth all things, and that Adam 'heard the sound of the feet of the Lord walking in the garden,' and thus they ascribe the infirmities of men to the

[1] 2 Cor. v. 4–8. [2] Ps. xciv. 8, 9.

majesty of God. But I affirm that God is all eye, all hand, all foot: all eye, because He sees all things; all hand, because He worketh all things; all foot, because He is everywhere present. See, therefore, what the Psalmist saith: 'He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, doth He not behold?' He doth not say: 'He that planted the ear, has He not an ear? and He that formed the eye, has He not an eye?' But what does he say? 'He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, doth He not behold?' The Psalmist has ascribed to God the powers of seeing and hearing, but has not assigned members to Him."[1]

15. I have thought it my duty to quote all these passages from the writings of both Latin and Greek authors who, being in the Catholic Church before our time, have written commentaries on the divine oracles, in order that our brother, if he hold any different opinion from theirs, may know that it becomes him, laying aside all bitterness of controversy, and preserving or reviving fully the gentleness of brotherly love, to investigate with diligent and calm consideration either what he must learn from others, or what others must learn from him. For the reasonings of any men whatsoever, even though they be Catholics, and of high reputation, are not to be treated by us in the same way as the canonical Scriptures are treated. We are at liberty, without doing any violence to the respect which these men deserve, to condemn and reject anything in their writings, if perchance we shall find that they have entertained opinions differing from that which others or we ourselves have, by the divine help, discovered to be the truth. I deal thus with the writings of others, and I wish my intelligent readers to deal thus with mine. In fine, I do by the help of the Lord most stedfastly believe, and, in so far as He enables me, I understand what is taught in all the statements which I have now quoted from the works of the holy and learned Ambrose, Jerome, Athanasius, Gregory, and in any other similar statements in other writers which I have read, but have for the sake of brevity forborne from quoting, namely, that God is not a body, that He has not the mem-

[1] Jerome, *in loc.*

bers of the human frame, that He is not divisible through space, and that He is unchangeably invisible, and appeared not in His essential nature and substance, but in such visible form as He pleased to those to whom he appeared on the occasions on which Scripture records that He was seen by holy persons with the eyes of the body.

Chap. v. 16. As to the spiritual body which we shall have in the resurrection, how great a change for the better it is to undergo,—whether it shall become pure spirit, so that the whole man shall then be a spirit, or shall (as I rather think, but do not yet confidently maintain) become a spiritual body in such a way as to be called spiritual because of a certain ineffable facility in its movements, but at the same time to retain its material substance, which cannot live and feel by itself, but only through the spirit which uses it (for in our present state, in like manner, although the body is spoken of as animated [animal], the nature of the animating principle is different from that of the body),—and whether, if the properties of the body then immortal and incorruptible shall remain unchanged, it shall then in some degree aid the spirit to see visible, *i.e.* material things, as at present we are unable to see anything of that kind except through the eyes of the body, or our spirit shall then be able, even in its higher state, to know material things without the instrumentality of the body (for God Himself does not know these things through bodily senses),—on these and on many other things which may perplex us in the discussion of this subject, I confess that I have not yet read anywhere anything which I would esteem sufficiently established to deserve to be either learned or taught by men.

17. And for this reason, if our brother will bear patiently any degree whatever of hesitation on my part, let us in the meantime, because of that which is written, "We shall see Him as He is," prepare, so far as with the help of God Himself we are enabled, hearts purified for that vision. Let us at the same time inquire more calmly and carefully concerning the spiritual body, for it may be that God, if He know this to be useful to us, may condescend to show us some definite and clear view on the subject, in accordance

with His written word. For if a more careful investigation shall result in the discovery that the change on the body shall be so great that it shall be able to see things that are invisible, such power imparted to the body will not, I think, deprive the mind of the power of seeing, and thus give the outward man a vision of God which is denied to the inward man; as if, in contradiction of the plain words of Scripture, "that God may be all and in all," [1] God were only beside the man—without him, and not in the man, in his inner being; or as if He, who is everywhere present in His entirety, unlimited in space, is so within man that He can be seen outside only by the outward man, but cannot be seen inside by the inward man. If such opinions are palpably absurd,—for, on the contrary, the saints shall be full of God; they shall not, remaining empty within, be surrounded outside by Him; nor shall they, through being blind within, fail to see Him of whom they are full, and, having eyes only for that which is outside of themselves, behold Him by whom they shall be surrounded,—if, I say, these things are absurd, it remains for us to rest meanwhile certainly assured as to the vision of God by the inward man. But if, by some wondrous change, the body shall be endowed with this power, another new faculty shall be added; the faculty formerly possessed shall not be taken away.

18. It is better, then, that we affirm that concerning which we have no doubt,—that God shall be seen by the inward man, which alone is able, in our present state, to see that love in commendation of which the apostle says, "God is love;" [2] the inward man, which alone is able to see "peace and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." [3] For no fleshly eye now sees love, peace, and holiness, and such things; yet all of them are seen, so far as they can be seen, by the eye of the mind, and the purer it is the more clearly it sees; so that we may, without hesitation, believe that we shall see God, whether we succeed or fail in our investigations as to the nature of our future body—although, at the same time, we hold it to be certain that the body shall rise again, immortal and incorruptible, because on this we

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 28. [2] 1 John iv. 8. [3] Heb. xii. 14.

have the plainest and strongest testimony of Holy Scripture. If, however, our brother affirm now that he has arrived at certain knowledge as to that spiritual body, in regard to which I am only inquiring, he will have just cause to be displeased with me if I shall refuse to listen calmly to his instructions, provided only that he also listen calmly to my questions. Now, however, I entreat you, for Christ's sake, to obtain his forgiveness for me for that harshness in my letter, by which, as I have learned, he was, not without cause, offended; and may you, by God's help, cheer my spirit by your answer.

LETTER CL.

(A.D. 413.)

TO PROBA[1] AND JULIANA, LADIES MOST WORTHY OF HONOUR, DAUGHTERS JUSTLY FAMOUS AND MOST DISTINGUISHED, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

You have filled our heart with a joy singularly pleasant, because of the love we bear to you, and singularly acceptable, because of the promptitude with which the tidings came to us. For while the consecration of the daughter of your house to a life of virginity is being published by most busy fame in all places where you are known, and that is everywhere, you have outstripped its flight by more sure and reliable information in a letter from yourselves, and have made us rejoice in certain knowledge before we had time to be questioning the truth of any report concerning an event so blessed and remarkable. Who can declare in words, or expound with adequate praises, how incomparably greater is the glory and advantage gained by your family in giving to Christ women consecrated to His service, than in giving to the world men called to the honours of the consulship? For if it be a great and noble thing to leave the mark of an honoured name upon the revolving ages of this world, how much greater and nobler is it to rise above it by unsullied chastity both of heart and of body! Let this maiden, therefore, illustrious in her pedi-

[1] See note to Letter CXXX. p. 142.

gree, yet more illustrious in her piety, find greater joy in obtaining, through espousals to her divine Lord, a pre-eminent glory in heaven, than she could have had in becoming, through espousal to a human consort, the mother of a line of illustrious men. This daughter of the house of Anicius has acted the more magnanimous part, in choosing rather to bring a blessing on that noble family by forbearing from marriage, than to increase the number of its descendants, preferring to be already, in the purity of her body, like unto the angels, rather than to increase by the fruit of her body the number of mortals. For this is a richer and more fruitful condition of blessedness, not to have a pregnant womb, but to develope the soul's lofty capacities; not to have the breasts flowing with milk, but to have the heart pure as snow; to travail not with the earthly in the pangs of labour, but with the heavenly in persevering prayer. May it be yours, my daughters, most worthy of the honour due to your rank, to enjoy in her that which was lacking to yourselves; may she be stedfast to the end, abiding in the conjugal union that has no end. May many handmaidens follow the example of their mistress; may those who are of humble rank imitate this high-born lady, and may those who possess eminence in this uncertain world aspire to that worthier eminence which humility has given to her. Let the virgins who covet the glory of the Anician family be ambitious rather to emulate its piety; for the former lies beyond their reach, however eagerly they may desire it, but the latter shall be at once in their possession if they seek it with full desire. May the right hand of the Most High protect you, giving you safety and greater happiness, ladies most worthy of honour, and most excellent daughters! In the love of the Lord, and with all becoming respect, we salute the children of your Holiness, and above all the one who is above the rest in holiness. We have received with very great pleasure the gift sent as a souvenir of her taking the veil.[1]

[1] Velationis apophoretum.

LETTER CLI.

(A.D. 413 OR 414.)

TO CÆCILIANUS,[1] MY LORD JUSTLY RENOWNED, AND SON MOST WORTHY OF THE HONOUR DUE BY ME TO HIS RANK, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. THE remonstrance which you have addressed to me in your letter is gratifying to me in proportion to the love which it manifests. If, therefore, I attempt to clear myself from blame in regard to my silence, the thing which I must attempt is to show that you had no just cause for being displeased with me. But since nothing gives me greater pleasure than that you condescended to take offence at my silence, which I had supposed to be a matter of no moment in the midst of your many cares, I will be pleading against myself if I endeavour thus to clear myself from blame. For if you were wrong in being displeased at me for not writing to you, this must be because of your having such a poor opinion of me that you are absolutely indifferent whether I speak or remain silent. Nay, the displeasure which arises from your being distressed by my silence is not displeasure. I therefore feel not so much grief at my withholding, as joy at your desiring a communication from me. For it is an honour, not a vexation, to me, that I should have a place in the remembrance of an old friend, and a man who is (though you may not say it, yet it is our duty to acknowledge it) of such eminent worth and greatness, holding a position in a foreign country, and burdened with public responsibilities. Pardon me, then, for expressing my gratitude that you did not regard me as a person whose silence it was beneath you to resent. For now I am persuaded, through that benevolence which distinguishes you more even than your high rank, that in the midst of your numerous and important occupations, not of a private nature, but public, involving the interests of all, a letter from me may be esteemed by you not burdensome, but welcome.

[1] Cæcilianus was raised in 409 to the office of *præfectus prætorio* under Honorius, and is probably the person to whom Augustine addressed Letter LXXXVI. vol. i. p. 354, in 405 A.D.

2. For when I had received the letter of the holy father Innocentius, venerable for his eminent merits, which was sent to me by the brethren, and which was, by manifest tokens, shown to have been forwarded to me from your Excellency, I formed the opinion that the reason why no letter from you accompanied it was that, being engrossed with more important affairs, you were unwilling to be embarrassed by the trouble of correspondence. For it seemed certainly not unreasonable to expect, that when you condescended to send me the writings of a holy man, I should receive along with them some writing of your own. I had therefore made up my mind not to trouble you with a letter from me, unless it was necessary for the purpose of commending to you some one to whom I could not refuse the service of my intercession, a favour which it is our custom to grant to all,—a custom which, though involving much trouble, is not to be altogether condemned. I accordingly did this, recommending to your kindness a friend of mine, from whom I have now received a letter, expressing his thanks, to which I add my own, for your service.

3. If, however, I had formed any unfavourable impression concerning you, especially in regard to the matter of which, though it was not expressly named, a subtle odour, so to speak, pervaded your whole letter, far would it have been from me to write to you any such note in order to ask any favour for myself or another. In that case I would either have been silent, waiting for a time when I would have an opportunity of seeing you personally; or if I considered it my duty to write on the subject, I would have given it the first place in my letter, and would have treated it in such a way as to make it almost impossible for you to show displeasure. For when, notwithstanding remonstrances which, under an anxiety shared by you with us, we addressed to him,—beseeching him vehemently, but in vain, to forbear from piercing our hearts with so great sorrow, and mortally wounding his own conscience by such grievous sin,—he[1] perpetrated his impious,

[1] From the beginning to the end of this letter, Augustine studiously avoids naming the persons concerned in the perfidious act of judicial murder, in connection with which the suspicion of many had been fastened upon Cæcilianus. The person by whose orders the sentence of death was carried into effect was Count

savage, and perfidious crime, I left Carthage immediately and secretly, for this reason, lest the numerous and influential persons who in terror sought refuge from his sword within the church should, imagining that my presence could be of use to them, detain me by their passionate weeping and groaning, so that I would be compelled, in order to secure the preservation of their bodies, to supplicate a favour from one whom it was impossible for me to rebuke, in order to the welfare of his soul, with the severity which his crime deserved. As for their personal safety, I knew that the walls of the church sufficed for their protection. But for myself [if I remained to intercede with him on their behalf], it could only be in circumstances painfully embarrassing, for he would not have tolerated my acting towards him as I was bound to do, and I would have been compelled, moreover, to act in a way which would have been unbecoming in me. At the same time, I was truly sorry for the misfortune of my venerable co-bishop, the ruler of such an important church, who was expected to regard it as his duty, even after this man had been guilty of such infamous treachery, to treat him with submissive deference, in order that the lives of others might be spared. I confess the reason of my departure: it was that I would have been unable to meet with the necessary fortitude so great a calamity.

4. The same considerations which made me then depart would have been the cause of my remaining silent to you, if I believed you to have used your influence with him to avenge such wicked injuries. This is believed in regard to you only by those who do not know how, and how frequently, and in what terms, you expressed your mind to us, when we were

Marinus, the general by whom the attempt of Heraclianus (413 A.D.) to seize the imperial power was defeated, and who afterwards received a commission to pass into Africa and punish those who had been implicated in the revolt of Heraclianus. A commission of this kind opened a wide door for the gratification of private revenge by enemies who did not scruple to bring false accusations against the innocent; and among the victims of such injustice were two brothers who had, by their zeal for the Catholic Church, made themselves obnoxious to the Donatists. The elder of these was Apringius, a magistrate to whom Augustine wrote a letter (the 134th) recommending clemency in punishing the Donatists. The younger was Marcellinus, concerning whom see also note to Letter CXXXIII. p. 168.

with anxious solicitude doing our utmost to secure that, because he was so intimate with you, and you were so constantly visiting him, and so often conversing alone with him, he should all the more carefully guard your good name, and save you from being supposed to have used no endeavour to prevent him from inflicting that mode of death on persons said to be your enemies. This, indeed, is not believed of you by me, nor by my brethren who heard you in conversation, and who saw, both in your words and in every gesture, the evidences of your heart's good-will to those who were put to death. But, I beseech you, forgive those by whom it is believed; for they are men, and in the minds of men there are such lurking places and such depths that, although all suspicious persons deserved to be blamed, they think themselves that they even deserve praise for their prudence. There existed reasons for the conduct imputed to you: we knew that you had suffered very grievous injury from one of those whom he had suddenly ordered to be arrested. His brother, also, in whose person especially he persecuted the Church, was said to have answered you in terms implying as it were some harsh accusation. Both were thought to be looked upon by you with suspicion. When they, after being summoned, had gone away, you still remained in the place, and were engaged, it was said, in conversation of a more private kind than usual with him [Marinus], and then they were suddenly ordered to be detained. Men talked much of your friendship with him as not recent, but of long standing. The closeness of your intimacy, and the frequency of your private conversations with him, confirmed this report. His power was at that time great. The ease with which false accusations could be made against any one was notorious. It was not a difficult thing to find some person who would upon the promise of his own safety make any statements which he might order to be made. All things at that time made it easy for any man to be brought to death without any examination on the part of him who ordered the execution, if even one witness brought forward what seemed to be an odious and, at the same time, credible accusation.

5. Meanwhile, as it was rumoured that the power of the Church might deliver them, we were mocked with false promises, so that not only with the consent, but, as it seemed, at the urgent desire of Marinus, a bishop was sent to the Imperial Court to intercede for them, the promise having been brought to the ear of the bishops that, until some pleading should be heard there on behalf of the prisoners, no examination of their case would be proceeded with. At last, on the day before they were put to death, your Excellency came to us; you gave us encouragement such as you had never before given, that he might grant their lives as a favour to you before your departure [for Rome], because you had solemnly and prudently said to him that all his condescension in admitting you so constantly to familiar and private conversation would bring to you disgrace rather than distinction, and would have the effect, after the death of these men had been a subject of conversation and consultation between you, of making every one say that there could be no doubt what was to be the issue of these conferences. When you informed us that you had said these things to him, you stretched out your hand as you spoke towards the place at which the sacraments of believers are celebrated, and while we listened in amazement, you confirmed the statement that you had used these words with an oath so solemn, that not only then, but even now after the dreadful and unexpected death of the prisoners, it seems to me, recalling to memory your whole demeanour, that it would be an aggravated insult if I were to believe any evil concerning you. You said, moreover, that he was so moved by these words of yours, that he purposed to give the lives of these men to you as a present, in token of friendship, before you set out on your journey.

6. Wherefore, I solemnly assure your Grace, that when on the following day (the day on which the infamous crime thus conceived was consummated) tidings were unexpectedly brought to us that they had been led forth from prison to stand before him as their judge, although we were in some alarm, nevertheless, after reflecting on what you had said to us on the preceding day, and on the fact that the day follow-

ing was the anniversary of the blessed Cyprian, I supposed that he had even purposely selected a day on which he might not only grant your request, but also might aspire, by giving sudden joy to the whole Church of Christ, to emulate the virtue of so great a martyr, proving himself truly greater in using clemency in sparing life than in possessing power to inflict death. Such were my thoughts, when lo! a messenger burst into our presence, from whom, before we could ask him how their trial was being conducted, we learned that they had been beheaded. For care had been taken to arrange, as the scene of execution, a place immediately adjoining, not appointed for the punishment of criminals, but used for the recreation of the citizens, on which spot he had ordered some to be executed a few days previously, with the design (as is with good reason believed) of avoiding the odium of applying it to this purpose for the first time in the case of these men, whom he hoped to be able to snatch secretly from the Church interposing on their behalf, by thus not only ordering their immediate execution, but also ordering it to take place on the nearest available spot. He therefore made it sufficiently manifest that he did not fear to cause cruel pain to that Mother whose intervention he feared, namely, to the holy Church, among whose faithful children, baptized in her bosom, we knew that he himself was reckoned. Therefore, after the issue of so great a plot, in which so much care had been used in negotiating with us that we were made, even by you also, though unwittingly, almost free from solicitude, and almost sure of their safety on the preceding day, who, judging of the circumstances in the way in which ordinary men would judge of them, could avoid regarding it as beyond question that by you also words were given to us and life taken from them? Pardon, then, as I have said, those who believe these things against you, although we do not believe them, O excellent man.

7. Far be it, however, from my heart and from my practice, however defective in many things, to intercede with you for any one, or ask a favour from you for any one, if I believed you to be responsible for this monstrous wrong, this villanous cruelty. But I frankly confess to you, that if you continue, even after that event, to be on the same footing of intimate

friendship with him as you were formerly, you must excuse my claiming freedom to be grieved; for by this you would compel us to believe much which we would rather disbelieve. It is, however, fitting that, as I do not believe you guilty of the other things laid by some to your charge, I should not believe this either. This friend of yours has, in the unexpected triumph of sudden accession to power, done violence not less to your reputation than to these men's lives. Nor is it my design in this statement to kindle hatred in your mind; in so doing I would belie my own feelings and profession. But I exhort you to a more faithful exercise of love towards him. For the man who so deals with the wicked as to make them repent of their evil doings, is one who knows how to be angry with them, and yet consult for their good; for as bad companions hinder men's welfare by compliance, so good friends help them by opposition to their evil ways. The same weapon with which, in the proud abuse of power, he took away the lives of others, inflicted a much deeper and more serious wound on his own soul; and if he do not remedy this by repentance, using wisely the long-suffering of God, he will be compelled to find it out and feel it when this life is ended. Often, moreover, God in His wisdom permits the life of good men in this world to be taken from them by the wicked, that He may prevent men from believing that to suffer such things is in their case a calamity. For what harm can result from the death of the body to men who are destined to die some time? Or what do those who fear death accomplish by their care but a short postponement of the time at which they die? All the evil to which mortal men are liable comes not from death but from life; and if in dying they have the soul sustained by Christian grace, death is to them not the night of darkness in which a good life ends, but the dawn in which a better life begins.[1]

8. The life and conversation of the elder of the two brothers appeared indeed more conformed to this world than to Christ, although he also had after his marriage corrected to a great extent the faults of his early irreligious years. It

[1] In the original of this sentence there is a characteristic antithesis of phrases: "Non sane mors eorum bonæ vitæ occasus fuit sed melioris occasio."

may, nevertheless, have been not otherwise than in mercy that our merciful God appointed him to be the companion of his brother in death. But as to that younger brother, he lived religiously, and was eminent as a Christian both in heart and in practice. The report that he would approve himself such when commissioned to serve the Church[1] came before him to Africa, and this good report followed him still when he had come. In his conduct, what innocence! in his friendship, what constancy! in his study of Christian truth, what zeal! in his religion, what sincerity! in his domestic life, what purity! in his official duties, what integrity! What patience he showed to enemies, what affability to friends, what humility to the pious, what charity to all men! How great his promptitude in granting, and his bashfulness in asking a favour! How genuine his satisfaction in the good deeds, and his sorrow over the faults of men! What spotless honour, noble grace, and scrupulous piety shone in him! In rendering assistance, how compassionate he was! in forgiving injuries, how generous! in prayer, how confiding! When well informed on any subject, with what modesty he was wont to communicate useful knowledge! when conscious of ignorance, with what diligence did he endeavour by investigation to overcome the disadvantage! How singular was his contempt for the things of time! how ardent his hope and his desires in regard to the blessings that are eternal! He would have relinquished all secular business and girded himself with the insignia of the Christian warfare, had he not been prevented by his having entered into the married state; for he had not begun to desire better things before the time when, being already involved in these bonds, it would have been, notwithstanding their inferiority, an unlawful thing for him to rend them asunder.

9. One day when they were confined in prison together, his brother said to him: "If I suffer these things as the just punishment of my sins, what ill desert has brought you to the same fate, for we know that your life was most strictly and earnestly Christian?" He replied: "Supposing even that your testimony as to my life were true, do you think that

[1] See note to Letter CXXXIII. p. 168.

God is bestowing a small favour upon me in appointing that my sins be punished in these sufferings, even though they should end in death, instead of being reserved to meet me in the judgment which is to come?" These words might perhaps lead some to suppose that he was conscious of some secret immoralities. I shall therefore mention what it pleased the Lord God to appoint that I should hear from his lips, and know assuredly, to my own great consolation. Being anxious about this very thing, as human nature is liable to fall into such wickedness, I asked him, when I was alone with him after he was confined in prison, if there was no sin for which he ought to seek reconciliation with God[1] by some more severe and special penance. With characteristic modesty he blushed at the mere mention of my suspicion, groundless though it was, but thanked me most warmly for the warning, and with a grave, modest smile he seized with both hands my right hand, and said: "I swear by the sacraments which are dispensed to me by this hand, that I have neither before nor since my marriage been guilty of immoral self-indulgence."[2]

10. What evil, then, was brought to him by death? Nay, rather, was it not the occasion of the greatest possible good to him, because, in the possession of these gifts, he departed from this life to Christ, in whom alone they are really possessed? I would not mention these things in addressing you if I believed that you would be offended by my praising him. But assuredly, as I do not believe this, neither do I believe that his being put to death was even according to your desire or wish, much less that it was done at your request. You, therefore, with a sincerity proportioned to your innocence in this matter, entertain, doubtless, along with us, the opinion that the man who put him to death inflicted more cruel wrong on his own soul than on the sufferer's body, when, in despite of us, in despite of his own promises, in despite of so many supplications and warnings from you, and finally, in despite of the Church of Christ (and in her of Christ Himself), he consummated his base machinations by putting this man to death. Is the high position of the one worthy to be compared with the lot of the other, prisoner though he was, when the man of power

[1] Deum sibi placare. [2] Me nullum esse expertum concubitum præter uxorem.

was maddened by anger, while the sufferer in his prison was filled with joy? There is nothing in all the dungeons of this world, nay, not even in hell itself, to surpass the dreadful doom of darkness to which a villain is consigned by remorse of conscience. Even to yourself, what evil did he do? He did not destroy your innocence, although he grievously injured your reputation; which, nevertheless, remains uninjured, both in the estimation of those who know you better than we do, and in our estimation, in whose presence the anxiety which, like us, you felt for the prevention of such a monstrous crime, was expressed with so much visible agitation that we could almost see with our eyes the invisible workings of your heart. Whatever harm, therefore, he has done, he has done to himself alone; he has pierced through his own soul, his own life, his own conscience; in fine, he has by that blind deed of cruelty destroyed even his own good name, a thing which the very worst of men are usually fain to preserve. For to all good men he is odious in proportion to his efforts to obtain, or his satisfaction in receiving, the approbation of the wicked.

11. Could anything prove more clearly that he was not under the necessity which he pretended—alleging that he did this evil action as a good man who had no alternative—than the fact that the proceeding was disapproved of by the person whose orders he dared to plead as his excuse? The pious deacon by whose hand we send this was himself associated with the bishop whom we had sent to intercede for them; let him, therefore, relate to your Excellency how it seemed good to the Emperor not even to give a formal pardon, lest by this the stigma of a crime should be in some degree attached to them, but a mere notice commanding them to be immediately set at liberty from all further annoyance. By a purely gratuitous act of cruelty, and under no pressure of necessity (although, perchance, there may have been other causes which we suspect, but which it is unnecessary to state in writing), he did outrageously vex the Church,—the Church to whose sheltering bosom his brother once, in fear of death, had fled, to be requited for protecting his life by finding him active in counselling the perpetration of this crime,—the Church in which he himself had once, when under the displeasure of an

offended patron, sought an asylum which could not be denied to him. If you love this man, show your detestation of his crime; if you do not wish him to come into everlasting punishment, shrink with horror from his society. You are bound to take measures of this kind, both for your own good name and for his life; for he who loves in this man what God hates, is, in truth, hating not only this man but also his own soul.

12. These things being so, I know your benevolence too well to believe that you were the author of this crime, or an accomplice in its commission, or that with malicious cruelty you deceived us: far be such conduct from your life and conversation! At the same time, I would not wish your friendship to be of such a character as tends to make him, to his own destruction, glory in his crime, and to confirm the suspicions naturally cherished by men concerning you; but rather let it be such as to move him to penitence, and to penitence corresponding in quality and in measure to the remedy demanded for the healing of such dreadful wounds. For the more you are an enemy to his crimes, the more really will you be a friend to the man himself. It will be interesting to us to learn, by your Excellency's reply to this letter, where you were on the day on which the crime was committed, how you received the tidings, and what you did thereafter, and what you said to him and heard from him when you next saw him; for I have not been able to hear anything of you in connection with this affair since my sudden departure on the succeeding day.

13. As to the remark in your letter that you are now compelled to believe that I refuse to visit Carthage for fear lest you should be seen there by me, you rather compel me by these words to state explicitly the reasons of my absence. One reason is, that the labour which I am obliged to undergo in that city, and which I could not describe without adding as much again to the length of this letter, is more than I am able now to bear, since, in addition to my infirmities peculiar to myself, which are known to all my more intimate friends, I am burdened with an infirmity common to the human family, namely, the weakness of old age. The other reason is, that,

in so far as leisure is granted me from the work imperatively demanded by the Church, which my office specially binds me to serve, I have resolved to devote the time entirely, if the Lord will, to the labour of studies pertaining to ecclesiastical learning; in doing which I think that I may, if it please the mercy of God, be of some service even to future generations.

14. There is, indeed, one thing in you, since you wish to hear the truth, which causes me very great distress: it is that, although qualified by age, as well as by life and character, to do otherwise, you still prefer to be a catechumen; as if it were not possible for believers, by making progress in Christian faith and well-doing, to become so much the more faithful and useful in the administration of public business. For surely the promotion of the welfare of men is the one great end of all your great cares and labours. And, indeed, if this were not to be the issue of your public services, it would be better for you even to sleep both day and night than to sacrifice your rest in order to do work which can contribute nothing to the advantage of your fellow-men. Nor do I entertain the slightest doubt that your Excellency . . .

(*Cætera desunt.*)

LETTER CLVIII.

(A.D. 414.)

TO MY LORD AUGUSTINE, MY BROTHER PARTNER IN THE SACERDOTAL OFFICE, MOST SINCERELY LOVED, WITH PROFOUND RESPECT, AND TO THE BRETHREN WHO ARE WITH HIM, EVODIUS[1] AND THE BRETHREN WHO ARE WITH HIM SEND GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. I URGENTLY beg you to send the reply due to my last letter. Indeed, I would have preferred first to learn what I then asked, and afterwards to put the questions which I now submit to you.

[1] Evodius, Bishop of Uzala, was one of Augustine's early friends. He was a native of the same town (Tagaste), and joined Augustine and Alypius in seeking religious retirement after their baptism, in 387 A.D. He was also with them at Ostia when Monica died. (*Confessions*, Book ix. ch. 8 and 12).

Give me your attention while I relate an event in which you will kindly take an interest, and which has made me impatient to lose no time in acquiring, if possible in this life, the knowledge which I desired. I had a certain youth as a clerk, a son of presbyter Armenus of Melonita, whom, by my humble instrumentality, God rescued when he was becoming already immersed in secular affairs, for he was employed as a shorthand writer by the proconsul's solicitor.[1] He was then, indeed, as boys usually are, prompt and somewhat restless, but as he grew older (for his death occurred in his twenty-second year) a gravity of deportment and circumspect probity of life so adorned him that it is a pleasure to dwell upon his memory. He was, moreover, a clever stenographer,[2] and indefatigable in writing: he had begun also to be earnest in reading, so that he even urged me to do more than my indolence would have chosen, in order to spend hours of the night in reading, for he read aloud to me for a time every night after all was still; and in reading, he would not pass over any sentence unless he understood it, and would go over it a third or even a fourth time, and not leave it until what he wished to know was made clear. I had begun to regard him not as a mere boy and clerk, but as a comparatively intimate and pleasant friend, for his conversation gave me much delight.

2. He desired also to "depart and to be with Christ,"[3] a desire which has been fulfilled. For he was ill for sixteen days in his father's house, and by strength of memory he continually repeated portions of Scripture throughout almost the whole time of his illness. But when he was very near to the end of his life, he sang[4] so as to be heard by all, "My soul longeth for and hastens unto the courts of the Lord,"[5] after which he sang again, "Thou hast anointed my head with oil, and how beautiful is Thy cup, overpowering my senses with delight!"[6] In these things he was wholly occupied; in the consolation yielded by them he found satisfaction. At the last, when dissolution was just coming upon him, he began to make the sign of the cross on his forehead, and in finishing

[1] Nam scholastico proconsulis excipiebat.
[2] Strenuus in notis.
[3] Dissolvi et esse cum Christo. Phil. i. 23.
[4] Psallebat.
[5] Ps. lxxxiv. 2, LXX.
[6] Ps. xxiii. 5, 6, LXX.

this his hand was moving down to his mouth, which also he wished to mark with the same sign, but the inward man (which had been truly renewed day by day)[1] had, ere this was done, forsaken the tabernacle of clay. To myself there has been given so great an ecstasy of joy, that I think that after leaving his own body he has entered into my spirit, and is there imparting to me a certain fulness of light from his presence, for I am conscious of a joy beyond all measure through his deliverance and safety—indeed it is ineffable. For I felt no small anxiety on his account, being afraid of the dangers peculiar to his years. For I was at pains to inquire of himself whether perchance he had been defiled by intercourse with woman; he solemnly assured us that he was free from this stain, by which declaration our joy was still more increased. So he died. We honoured his memory by suitable obsequies, such as were due to one so excellent, for we continued during three days to praise the Lord with hymns at his grave, and on the third day we offered the sacraments of redemption.[2]

3. Behold, however, two days thereafter, a certain respectable widow from Figentes, an handmaid of God, who said that she had been twelve years in widowhood, saw the following vision in a dream. She saw a certain deacon, who had died four years ago, preparing a palace, with the assistance of servants and handmaids of God (virgins and widows). It was being so much adorned that the place was refulgent with splendour, and appeared to be wholly made of silver. On her inquiring eagerly for whom this palace was being prepared, the deacon aforesaid answered, "For the young man, the son of the presbyter, who was cut off yesterday." There appeared in the same palace an old man robed in white, who gave orders to two others, also dressed in white, to go and, having raised the body from the grave, to carry it up with them to heaven. And she added, that so soon as the body had been taken up from the grave and carried to heaven, there sprang from the same sepulchre branches of the rose, called from its folded blossoms the virgin rose.

4. I have narrated the event: listen now, if you please, to my question, and teach me what I ask, for the departure of

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 16. [2] Redemptionis sacramenta obtulimus.

that young man's soul forces such questions from me. While we are in the body, we have an inward faculty of perception which is alert in proportion to the activity of our attention, and is more wakeful and eager the more earnestly attentive we become; and it seems to us probable that even in its highest activity it is retarded by the encumbrance of the body, for who can fully describe all that the mind suffers through the body? In the midst of the perturbation and annoyance which come from the suggestions, temptations, necessities, and varied afflictions of which the body is the cause, the mind does not surrender its strength, it resists and conquers. Sometimes it is defeated; nevertheless, mindful of what is its own nature, it becomes, under the stimulating influence of such labours, more active and more wary, and breaks through the meshes of wickedness, and so makes its way to better things. Your Holiness will kindly understand what I mean to say. Therefore, while we are in this life, we are hindered by such deficiencies, and are nevertheless, as it is written, "more than conquerors through Him that loved us."[1] When we go forth from this body, and escape from every burden, and from sin with its incessant activity, what are we?

5. In the first place, I ask whether there may not be some kind of body (formed, perchance, of one of the four elements, either air or ether) which does not depart from the incorporeal principle, that is, the substance properly called the soul, when it forsakes this earthly body. For as the soul is in its nature incorporeal, if it be absolutely disembodied by death there is now one soul of all that have left this world. And in that case where would the rich man, who was clothed in purple, and Lazarus, who was full of sores, now be? How, moreover, could they be distinguished according to their respective deserts, so that the one should have suffering and the other have joy, if there were only a single soul made by the combination of all disembodied souls, unless, of course, these things are to be understood in a figurative sense? Be that as it may, there is no question that souls which are held in definite places (as that rich man was in the flame, and that poor man was in Abraham's bosom) are held in bodies. If

[1] Rom. viii. 37.

there are distinct places, there are bodies, and in these bodies the souls reside; and even although the punishments and rewards are experienced in the conscience, the soul which experiences them is nevertheless in a body. Whatever is the nature of that one soul made up of many souls, it must be possible for it in its unbroken unity to be both grieved and made glad at the same moment, if it is to approve itself to be really a substance consisting of many souls gathered into one. If, however, this soul is called one only in the same way as the incorporeal mind is called one, although it has in it memory, and will, and intellect, and if it be alleged that all these are separate incorporeal causes [or powers], and have their several distinctive offices and work without one impeding another in any way, I think this might be in some measure answered by saying that it must be also possible for some of the souls to be under punishment and some of the souls to enjoy rewards simultaneously in this one substance consisting of many souls gathered into one.

6. Or if this be not so [that is, if there be no such body remaining still in union with the incorporeal principle after it quits this earthly body], what is there to hinder each soul from having, when separated from the solid body which it here inhabits, another body, so that the soul always animates a body of some kind? or in what body does it pass to any region, if such there be, to which necessity compels it to go? For the angels themselves, if they were not numbered by bodies of some kind which they have, could not be called many, as they are by the Truth Himself when He said in the gospel, "I could pray the Father, and He will presently give me twelve legions of angels."[1] Again, it is certain that Samuel was seen in the body when he was raised at the request of Saul;[2] and as to Moses, whose body was buried, it is plain from the gospel narrative that he came in the body to the Lord on the mountain to which He and His disciples had retired.[3] In the Apocrypha, and in the *Mysteries of Moses*, a writing which is wholly devoid of authority, it is indeed said that, at the time when he ascended the mount to die, through the power which his body possessed, there was one

[1] Matt. xxvi. 53. [2] 1 Sam. xxviii. 14. [3] Matt. xvii. 3.

body which was committed to the earth, and another which was joined to the angel who accompanied him; but I do not feel myself called upon to give to a sentence in apocryphal writings a preference over the definite statements quoted above. We must therefore give attention to this, and search out, by the help either of the authority of revelation or of the light of reason, the matter about which we are inquiring. But it is alleged that the future resurrection of the body is a proof that the soul was after death absolutely without a body. This is not, however, an unanswerable objection, for the angels, who are like our souls invisible, have at times desired to appear in bodily forms and be seen, and (whatever might be the form of body worthy to be assumed by these spirits) they have appeared, for example, to Abraham[1] and to Tobias.[2] Therefore it is quite possible that the resurrection of the body may, as we assuredly believe, take place, and yet that the soul may be reunited to it without its being found to have been at any moment wholly devoid of some kind of body. Now the body which the soul here occupies consists of the four elements, of which one, namely heat, seems to depart from this body at the same moment as the soul. For there remains after death that which is made of earth, moisture also is not wanting to the body, nor is the element of cold matter gone; heat alone has fled, which perhaps the soul takes along with it if it migrates from place to place. This is all that I say meanwhile concerning the body.

7. It seems to me also, that if the soul while occupying the living body is capable, as I have said, of strenuous mental application, how much more unencumbered, active, vigorous, earnest, resolute, and persevering will it be, how much enlarged in capacity and improved in character, if it has while in this body learned to relish virtue! For after laying aside this body, or rather, after having this cloud swept away, the soul will have come to be free from all disturbing influences, enjoying tranquillity and exempt from temptation, seeing whatever it has longed for, and embracing what it has loved. Then, also, it will be capable of remembering and recognising friends, both those who went before it from this world, and

[1] Gen. xviii. 6. [2] Tob. xii. 16.

those whom it left here below. Perhaps this may be true. I know not, but I desire to learn. But it would greatly distress me to think that the soul after death passes into a state of torpor, being as it were buried, just as it is during sleep while it is in the body, living only in hope, but having nothing and knowing nothing, especially if in its sleep it be not even stirred by any dreams. This notion causes me very great horror, and seems to indicate that the life of the soul is extinguished at death.

8. This also I would ask: Supposing that the soul be discovered to have such a body as we speak of, does that body lack any of the senses? Of course, if there cannot be imposed upon it any necessity for smelling, tasting, or touching, as I suppose will be the case, these senses will be wanting; but I hesitate as to the senses of sight and hearing. For are not devils said to hear (not, indeed, in all the persons whom they harass, for in regard to these there is a question), even when they appear in bodies of their own? And as to the faculty of sight, how can they pass from one place to another if they have a body but are void of the power of seeing, so as to guide its motions? Do you think that this is not the case with human souls when they go forth from the body,—that they have still a body of some kind, and are not deprived of some at least of the senses proper to this body? Else how can we explain the fact that very many dead persons have been observed by day, or by persons awake and walking abroad during the night, to pass into houses just as they were wont to do in their lifetime? This I have heard not once, but often; and I have also heard it said that in places in which dead bodies are interred, and especially in churches, there are commotions and prayers which are heard for the most part at a certain time of the night. This I remember hearing from more than one; for a certain holy presbyter was an eye-witness of such an apparition, having observed a multitude of such phantoms issuing from the baptistery in bodies full of light, after which he heard their prayers in the midst of the church itself. All such things are either true, and therefore helpful to the inquiry which we are now making, or are mere fables, in which case the fact of their invention is wonderful;

nevertheless I would desire to get some information from the fact that they come and visit men, and are seen otherwise than in dreams.

9. These dreams suggest another question. I do not at this moment concern myself about the mere creations of fancy, which are formed by the emotions of the uneducated. I speak of visitations in sleep, such as the apparition to Joseph[1] in a dream, in the manner experienced in most cases of the kind. In the same manner, therefore, our own friends also who have departed this life before us sometimes come and appear to us in dreams, and speak to us. For I myself remember that Profuturus, and Privatus, and Servilius, holy men who within my recollection were removed by death from our monastery, spoke to me, and that the events of which they spoke came to pass according to their words. Or if it be some other higher spirit that assumes their form and visits our minds, I leave this to the all-seeing eye of Him before whom everything from the highest to the lowest is uncovered. If, therefore, the Lord be pleased to speak through reason to your Holiness on all these questions, I beg you to be so kind as make me partaker of the knowledge which you have received. There is another thing which I have resolved not to omit mentioning, for perhaps it bears upon the matter now under investigation:

10. This same youth, in connection with whom these questions are brought forward, departed this life after having received what may be called a summons[2] at the time when he was dying. For one who had been a companion of his as a student, and reader, and shorthand writer to my dictation, who had died eight months before, was seen by a person in a dream coming towards him. When he was asked by the person who then distinctly saw him why he had come, he said, "I have come to take this friend away;" and so it proved. For in the house itself, also, there appeared to a certain old man, who was almost awake, a man bearing in his hand a laurel branch on which something was written. Nay, more, when this one was seen, it is further reported that after the death of the young man, his father the presbyter had begun to reside

[1] Matt. i. 20.

[2] Exhibitus quodammodo pergit.

along with the aged Theasius in the monastery, in order to find consolation there, but lo! on the third day after his death, the young man is seen entering the monastery, and is asked by one of the brethren in a dream of some kind whether he knew himself to be dead. He replied that he knew he was. The other asked whether he had been welcomed by God. This also he answered with great expressions of joy. And when questioned as to the reason why he had come, he answered, "I have been sent to summon my father." The person to whom these things were shown awakes, and relates what had passed. It comes to the ear of Bishop Theasius. He, being alarmed, sharply admonished the person who told him, lest the matter should come, as it might easily do, to the ear of the presbyter himself, and he should be disturbed by such tidings. But why prolong the narration? Within about four days from this visitation he was saying (for he had suffered from a moderate feverishness) that he was now out of danger, and that the physician had given up attending him, having assured him that there was no cause whatever for anxiety; but that very day this presbyter expired after he had lain down on his couch. Nor should I forbear mentioning, that on the same day on which the youth died, he asked his father three times to forgive him anything in which he might have offended, and every time that he kissed his father he said to him, "Let us give thanks to God, father," and insisted upon his father saying the words along with him, as if he were exhorting one who was to be his companion in going forth from this world. And in fact only seven days elapsed between the two deaths. What shall we say of things so wonderful? Who shall be a thoroughly reliable teacher as to these mysterious dispensations? To you in the hour of perplexity my agitated heart unburdens itself. The divine appointment of the death of the young man and of his father is beyond all doubt, for two sparrows shall not fall to the ground without the will of our heavenly Father.[1]

11. That the soul cannot exist in absolute separation from a body of some kind is proved in my opinion by the fact that to exist without body belongs to God alone. But I think

[1] Matt. x. 29.

that the laying aside of so great a burden as the body, in the act of passing from this world, proves that the soul will then be very much more wakeful than it is meanwhile; for then the soul appears, as I think, far more noble when no longer encumbered by so great a hindrance, both in action and in knowledge, and that entire spiritual rest proves it to be free from all causes of disturbance and error, but does not make it languid, and as it were slow, torpid, and embarrassed, inasmuch as it is enough for the soul to enjoy in its fulness the liberty to which it has attained in being freed from the world and the body; for, as you have wisely said, the intellect is satisfied with food, and applies the lips of the spirit to the fountain of life in that condition in which it is happy and blest in the undisputed lordship of its own faculties. For before I quitted the monastery I saw brother Servilius in a dream after his decease, and he said that we were labouring to attain by the exercise of reason to an understanding of truth, whereas he and those who were in the same state as he was were always resting in the pure joy of contemplation.

12. I also beg you to explain to me in how many ways the word wisdom is used; as God is wisdom, and a wise mind is wisdom (in which way it is said to be as light); as we read also of the wisdom of Bezaleel, who made the tabernacle or the ointment, and the wisdom of Solomon, or any other wisdom, if there be such, and wherein they differ from each other; and whether the one eternal Wisdom which is with the Father is to be understood as spoken of in these different degrees, as they are called diverse gifts of the Holy Spirit, who divideth to every one severally according as He will. Or, with the exception of that Wisdom alone which was not created, were these created, and have they a distinct existence of their own? or are they effects, and have they received their name from the definition of their work? I am asking a great many questions. May the Lord grant you grace to discover the truth sought, and wisdom sufficient to commit it to writing, and to communicate it without delay to me. I have written in much ignorance, and in a homely style; but since you think it worth while to know that about which I am inquiring, I beseech you in the name of Christ the Lord to

correct me where I am mistaken, and teach me what you know that I am desirous to learn.

LETTER CLIX.

(A.D. 415.)

TO EVODIUS, MY LORD MOST BLESSED, MY VENERABLE AND BELOVED BROTHER AND PARTNER IN THE PRIESTLY OFFICE, AND TO THE BRETHREN WHO ARE WITH HIM, AUGUSTINE AND THE BRETHREN WHO ARE WITH HIM SEND GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. Our brother Barbarus, the bearer of this letter, is a servant of God who has now for a long time been settled at Hippo, and has been an eager and diligent hearer of the word of God. He requested from us this letter to your Holiness, whereby we commend him to you in the Lord, and convey to you through him the salutations which it is our duty to offer. To reply to those letters of your Holiness, in which you have interwoven questions of great difficulty, would be a most laborious task, even for men who are at leisure, and who are endowed with much greater ability in discussing and acuteness in apprehending any subject than we possess. One, indeed, of the two letters in which you ask many great questions has gone amissing, I know not how, and though long sought for cannot be found; the other, which has been found, contains a very pleasing account of a servant of God, a good and chaste young man, stating how he departed from this life, and by what testimonies, communicated through visions of the brethren, his merits were, as you state, made known to you. Taking occasion from this young man's case, you propose and discuss an extremely obscure question concerning the soul,—whether it is associated when it goes forth from this body with some other kind of body, by means of which it can be carried to or confined in places having material boundaries? The investigation of this question, if indeed it admits of satisfactory investigation by beings such as we are, demands the most diligent care and labour, and therefore a mind absolutely at leisure from such occupations as engross my time. My opinion, however, if you are willing to hear it, summed up in a sentence, is, that I by

no means believe that the soul in departing from the body is accompanied by another body of any kind.

2. As to the question how these visions and predictions of future events are produced, let him attempt to explain them who understands by what power we are to account for the great wonders which are wrought in the mind of every man when his thoughts are busy. For we see, and we plainly perceive, that within the mind innumerable images of many objects discernible by the eye or by our other senses are produced,—whether they are produced in regular order or in confusion matters not to us at present: all that we say is, that since such images are beyond all dispute produced, the man who is found able to state by what power and in what way these phenomena of daily and perpetual experience are to be accounted for is the only man who may warrantably venture to conjecture or propound any explanation of these visions, which are of exceedingly rare occurrence. For my part, as I discover more plainly my inability to account for the ordinary facts of our experience, when awake or asleep, throughout the whole course of our lives, the more do I shrink from venturing to explain what is extraordinary. For while I have been dictating this epistle to you, I have been contemplating your person in my mind,—you being, of course, absent all the while, and knowing nothing of my thoughts,—and I have been imagining from my knowledge of what is in you how you will be affected by my words; and I have been unable to apprehend, either by observation or by inquiry, how this process was accomplished in my mind. Of one thing, however, I am certain, that although the mental image was very like something material it was not produced either by masses of matter or by qualities of matter. Accept this in the meantime from one writing under pressure of other duties, and in haste. In the twelfth of the books which I have written on Genesis this question is discussed with great care, and that dissertation is enriched with a forest of examples from actual experience or from trustworthy report. How far I have been competent to handle the question, and what I have accomplished in it, you will judge when you have read that work; if indeed the Lord shall be pleased in His kindness to permit me now to publish those

books systematically corrected to the best of my ability, and thus to meet the expectation of many brethren, instead of deferring their hope by continuing further the discussion of a subject which has already engaged me for a long time.

3. I will narrate briefly, however, one fact which I commend to your meditation. You know our brother Gennadius, a physician, known to almost every one, and very dear to us, who now lives at Carthage, and was in other years eminent as a medical practitioner at Rome. You know him as a man of religious character and of very great benevolence, actively compassionate and promptly liberal in his care of the poor. Nevertheless, even he, when still a young man, and most zealous in these charitable acts, had sometimes, as he himself told me, doubts as to whether there was any life after death. Forasmuch, therefore, as God would in no wise forsake a man so merciful in his disposition and conduct, there appeared to him in sleep a youth of remarkable appearance and commanding presence, who said to him: "Follow me." Following him, he came to a city where he began to hear on the right hand sounds of a melody so exquisitely sweet as to surpass anything he had ever heard. When he inquired what it was, his guide said: "It is the hymn of the blessed and the holy." What he reported himself to have seen on the left hand escapes my remembrance. He awoke; the dream vanished, and he thought of it as only a dream.

4. On a second night, however, the same youth appeared to Gennadius, and asked whether he recognised him, to which he replied that he knew him well, without the slightest uncertainty. Thereupon he asked Gennadius where he had become acquainted with him. There also his memory failed him not as to the proper reply: he narrated the whole vision, and the hymns of the saints which, under his guidance, he had been taken to hear, with all the readiness natural to recollection of some very recent experience. On this the youth inquired whether it was in sleep or when awake that he had seen what he had just narrated. Gennadius answered: "In sleep." The youth then said: "You remember it well; it is true that you saw these things in sleep, but I would have you know that even now you are seeing in sleep." Hearing this, Gennadius

was persuaded of its truth, and in his reply declared that he believed it. Then his teacher went on to say: "Where is your body now?" He answered: "In my bed." "Do you know," said the youth, "that the eyes in this body of yours are now bound and closed, and at rest, and that with these eyes you are seeing nothing?" He answered: "I know it." "What, then," said the youth, "are the eyes with which you see me?" He, unable to discover what to answer to this, was silent. While he hesitated, the youth unfolded to him what he was endeavouring to teach him by these questions, and forthwith said: "As while you are asleep and lying on your bed these eyes of your body are now unemployed and doing nothing, and yet you have eyes with which you behold me, and enjoy this vision, so, after your death, while your bodily eyes shall be wholly inactive, there shall be in you a life by which you shall still live, and a faculty of perception by which you shall still perceive. Beware, therefore, after this of harbouring doubts as to whether the life of man shall continue after death." This believer says that by this means all doubts as to this matter were removed from him. By whom was he taught this but by the merciful, providential care of God?

5. Some one may say that by this narrative I have not solved but complicated the question. Nevertheless, while it is free to every one to believe or disbelieve these statements, every man has his own consciousness at hand as a teacher by whose help he may apply himself to this most profound question. Every day man wakes, and sleeps, and thinks; let any man, therefore, answer whence proceed these things which, while not material bodies, do nevertheless resemble the forms, properties, and motions of material bodies: let him, I say, answer this if he can. But if he cannot do this, why is he in such haste to pronounce a definite opinion on things which occur very rarely, or are beyond the range of his experience, when he is unable to explain matters of daily and perpetual observation? For my part, although I am wholly unable to explain in words how those semblances of material bodies, without any real body, are produced, I may say that I wish that, with the same certainty with which I know that these things are not produced by the body, I could know by what means those things are perceived

which are occasionally seen by the spirit, and are supposed to be seen by the bodily senses; or by what distinctive marks we may know the visions of men who have been misguided by delusion, or, most commonly, by impiety, since the examples of such visions closely resembling the visions of pious and holy men are so numerous, that if I wished to quote them, time, rather than abundance of examples, would fail me.

May you, through the mercy of the Lord, grow in grace, most blessed lord and venerable and beloved brother!

LETTER CLXIII.

(A.D. 414.)

TO BISHOP AUGUSTINE, BISHOP EVODIUS SENDS GREETING.

SOME time ago I sent two questions to your Holiness; the first, which was sent, I think, by Jobinus, a servant in the nunnery,[1] related to God and reason, and the second was in regard to the opinion that the body of the Saviour is capable of seeing the substance of the Deity. I now propound a third question: Does the rational soul which our Saviour assumed along with His body fall under any one of the theories commonly advanced in discussions on the origin of souls (if any theory indeed can be with certainty established on the subject),—or does His soul, though rational, belong not to any of the species under which the souls of living creatures are classified, but to another?

I ask also a fourth question: Who are those spirits in reference to whom the Apostle Peter testifies concerning the Lord in these words: "Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit, in which also He went and preached to the spirits in prison"? giving us to understand that they were in hell, and that Christ, descending into hell, preached the gospel to them all, and by grace delivered them all from darkness and punishment, so that from the time of the resurrection of the Lord judgment is expected, hell having then been completely emptied.

What your Holiness believes in this matter I earnestly desire to know.

[1] Qui servit ancillis Dei.

LETTER CLXIV.

(A.D. 414.)

TO MY LORD EVODIUS MOST BLESSED, MY BROTHER AND PARTNER IN THE EPISCOPAL OFFICE, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. THE question which you have proposed to me from the epistle of the Apostle Peter is one which, as I think you are aware, is wont to perplex me most seriously, namely, how the words which you have quoted are to be understood on the supposition that they were spoken concerning hell? I therefore refer this question back to yourself, that if either you yourself be able, or can find any other person who is able to do so, you may remove and terminate my perplexities on the subject. If the Lord grant to me ability to understand the words before you do, and it be in my power to impart what I receive from Him to you, I will not withhold it from a friend so truly loved. In the meantime, I will communicate to you the things in the passage which occasion difficulty to me, that, keeping in view these remarks on the words of the apostle, you may either exercise your own thoughts on them, or consult any one whom you find competent to pronounce an opinion.

2. After having said that "Christ was put to death in the flesh, and quickened in the spirit," the apostle immediately went on to say: "in which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were unbelieving,[1] when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water;" thereafter he added the words: "which baptism also now by a like figure has saved you."[1] This, therefore, is felt by me to be difficult. If the Lord when He died preached in hell to spirits in prison, why were those who continued unbelieving while the ark was a preparing the only ones counted worthy of this favour, namely, the Lord's descending into hell? For in the ages between the time of Noah and the passion of Christ, there died many thousands

[1] Increduli. [1] 1 Pet. iii. 18–21.

of so many nations whom He might have found in hell. I do not, of course, speak here of those who in that period of time had believed in God, as, *e.g.* the prophets and patriarchs of Abraham's line, or, going farther back, Noah himself and his house, who had been saved by water (excepting perhaps the one son, who afterwards was rejected), and, in addition to these, all others outside of the posterity of Jacob who were believers in God, such as Job, the citizens of Nineveh, and any others, whether mentioned in Scripture or existing unknown to us in the vast human family at any time. I speak only of those many thousands of men who, ignorant of God and devoted to the worship of devils or of idols, had passed out of this life from the time of Noah to the passion of Christ. How was it that Christ, finding these in hell, did not preach to them, but preached only to those who were unbelieving in the days of Noah when the ark was a preparing? Or if he preached to all, why has Peter mentioned only these, and passed over the innumerable multitude of others?

CHAP. II. 3. It is established beyond question that the Lord, after He had been put to death in the flesh, "descended into hell;" for it is impossible to gainsay either that utterance of prophecy, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell,"[1]—an utterance which Peter himself expounds in the Acts of the Apostles, lest any one should venture to put upon it another interpretation,—or the words of the same apostle, in which he affirms that the Lord "loosed the pains of hell, in which it was not possible for Him to be holden."[2] Who, therefore, except an infidel, will deny that Christ was in hell? As to the difficulty which is found in reconciling the statement that the pains of hell were loosed by Him, with the fact that He had never begun to be in these pains as in bonds, and did not so loose them as if He had broken off chains by which He had been bound, this is easily removed when we understand that they were loosed in the same way as the snares of huntsmen may be loosed to prevent their holding, not because they have taken hold. It may also be understood as teaching us to be-

[1] Ps. xvi. 10.

[2] Acts ii. 24, 27, in which the words rendered by Augustine "inferni dolores" are: τὰς ὠδῖνας τοῦ θανάτου.

lieve Him to have loosed those pains which could not possibly hold Him, but which were holding those to whom He had resolved to grant deliverance.

4. But who these were it is presumptuous for us to define. For if we say that all who were found there were then delivered without exception, who will not rejoice if we can prove this? Especially will men rejoice for the sake of some who are intimately known to us by their literary labours, whose eloquence and talent we admire,—not only the poets and orators who in many parts of their writings have held up to contempt and ridicule these same false gods of the nations, and have even occasionally confessed the one true God, although along with the rest they observed superstitious rites, but also those who have uttered the same, not in poetry or rhetoric, but as philosophers; and for the sake of many more of whom we have no literary remains, but in regard to whom we have learned from the writings of these others that their lives were to a certain extent praiseworthy, so that (with the exception of their service of God, in which they erred, worshipping the vanities which had been set up as objects of public worship, and serving the creature rather than the Creator) they may be justly held up as models in all the other virtues of frugality, self-denial, chastity, sobriety, braving of death in their country's defence, and faith kept inviolate not only to fellow-citizens, but also to enemies. All these things, indeed, when they are practised with a view not to the great end of right and true piety, but to the empty pride of human praise and glory, become in a sense worthless and unprofitable; nevertheless, as indications of a certain disposition of mind, they please us so much that we would desire those in whom they exist, either by special preference or along with the others, to be freed from the pains of hell, were not the verdict of human feeling different from that of the justice of the Creator.

5. These things being so, if the Saviour delivered all from that place, and, to quote the terms of the question in your letter, "emptied hell, so that now from that time forward the last judgment was to be expected," the following things occasion not unreasonable perplexity on this subject, and are wont to present themselves to me in the meantime when I think

on it. First, by what authoritative statements can this opinion be confirmed? For the words of Scripture, that "the pains of hell were loosed" by the death of Christ, do not establish this, seeing that this statement may be understood as referring to Himself, and meaning that he so far loosed (that is, made ineffectual) the pains of hell that He Himself was not held by them, especially since it is added that it was "impossible for Him to be holden of them." Or if any one [objecting to this interpretation] ask the reason why He chose to descend into hell, where those pains were which could not possibly hold Him who was, as Scripture says, "free among the dead,"[1] in whom the prince and captain of death found nothing which deserved punishment, the words that "the pains of hell were loosed" may be understood as referring not to the case of all, but only of some whom He judged worthy of that deliverance; so that neither is He supposed to have descended thither in vain, without the purpose of bringing benefit to any of those who were there held in prison, nor is it a necessary inference that what divine mercy and justice granted to some must be supposed to have been granted to all.

CHAP. III. 6. As to the first man, the father of mankind, it is agreed by almost the entire Church that the Lord loosed him from that prison; a tenet which must be believed to have been accepted not without reason,—from whatever source it was handed down to the Church,—although the authority of the canonical Scriptures cannot be brought forward as speaking expressly in its support,[2] though this seems to be the opinion which is more than any other borne out by these words in the book of Wisdom.[3] Some add to this [tradition] that the same favour was bestowed on the holy men of antiquity,—on Abel, Seth, Noah and his house, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the other patriarchs and prophets, they also being loosed from those pains at the time when the Lord descended into hell.

[1] Ps. lxxxviii. 5.

[2] We give the original of this important sentence:—"De illo quidem primo homine patre generis humani, quod eum inde solverit Ecclesia fere tota consentit: quod eam non inaniter credidisse credendum est, undecumque hoc traditum sit, etiamsi canonicarum Scripturarum hinc expressa non proferatur auctoritas."

[3] Wisd. x. 1, 2.

7. But, for my part, I cannot see how Abraham, into whose bosom also the pious beggar in the parable was received, can be understood to have been in these pains; those who are able can perhaps explain this. But I suppose every one must see it to be absurd to imagine that only two, namely, Abraham and Lazarus, were in that bosom of wondrous repose before the Lord descended into hell, and that with reference to these two alone it was said to the rich man, "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us that would pass from thence."[1] Moreover, if there were more than two there, who will dare to say that the patriarchs and prophets were not there, to whose righteousness and piety so signal testimony is borne in the word of God? What benefit was conferred in that case on them by Him who loosed the pains of hell, in which they were not held, I do not yet understand, especially as I have not been able to find anywhere in Scripture the name of hell used in a good sense. And if this use of the term is nowhere found in the divine Scriptures, assuredly the bosom of Abraham, that is, the abode of a certain secluded rest, is not to be believed to be a part of hell. Nay, from these words themselves of the great Master, in which He says that Abraham said, "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed," it is, as I think, sufficiently evident that the bosom of that glorious felicity was not any integral part of hell. For what is that great gulf but a chasm completely separating those places between which it not only is, but is fixed? Wherefore, if sacred Scripture had said, without naming hell and its pains, that Christ when He died went to that bosom of Abraham, I wonder if any one would have dared to say that He "descended into hell."

8. But seeing that plain scriptural testimonies make mention of hell and its pains, no reason can be alleged for believing that He who is the Saviour went thither, except that He might save from its pains; but whether He did save all whom He found held in them, or some whom He judged worthy of that favour, I still ask: that He was, however, in hell, and that He conferred this benefit on persons subjected

[1] Luke xvi. 26.

to these pains, I do not doubt. Wherefore, I have not yet found what benefit He, when He descended into hell, conferred upon those righteous ones who were in Abraham's bosom, from whom I see that, so far as regarded the beatific presence of His Godhead, He never withdrew Himself; since even on that very day on which He died, He promised that the thief should be with Him in paradise at the time when He was about to descend to loose the pains of hell. Most certainly, therefore, He was, before that time, both in paradise and the bosom of Abraham in His beatific wisdom, and in hell in His condemning power; for since the Godhead is confined by no limits, where is He not present? At the same time, however, so far as regarded the created nature, in assuming which at a certain point of time, He, while continuing to be God, became man—that is to say, so far as regarded His soul, He was in hell: this is plainly declared in these words of Scripture, which were both sent before in prophecy and fully expounded by apostolical interpretation: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell."[1]

9. I know that some think that at the death of Christ a resurrection such as is promised to us at the end of the world was granted to the righteous, founding this on the statement in Scripture that, in the earthquake by which at the moment of His death the rocks were rent and the graves were opened, many bodies of the saints arose and were seen with Him in the Holy City after He rose. Certainly, if these did not fall asleep again, their bodies being a second time laid in the grave, it would be necessary to see in what sense Christ can be understood to be "the first-begotten from the dead,"[2] if so many preceded Him in the resurrection. And if it be said, in answer to this, that the statement is made by anticipation, so that the graves indeed are to be supposed to have been opened by that earthquake at the time when Christ was hanging on the cross, but that the bodies of the saints did not rise then, but only after Christ had risen before them,—although on this hypothesis of anticipation in the narrative, the addition of these words would not hinder us from still believing, on the one hand, that Christ was without doubt the first-

[1] Ps. xvi. 10. [2] Rev. i. 5.

begotten from the dead," and on the other, that to these saints permission was given, when He went before them, to rise to an eternal state of incorruption and immortality,—there still remains a difficulty, namely, how in that case Peter could have spoken as he did, saying what was without doubt perfectly true, when he affirmed that in the prophecy quoted above the words, that "His flesh should not see corruption," referred not to David but to Christ, and added concerning David, "He is buried, and his sepulchre is with us to this day,"[1]—a statement which would have had no force as an argument unless the body of David was still undisturbed in the sepulchre; for of course the sepulchre might still have been there even had the saint's body been raised up immediately after his death, and had thus not seen corruption. But it seems hard that David should not be included in this resurrection of the saints, if eternal life was given to them, since it is so frequently, so clearly, and with such honourable mention of his name, declared that Christ was to be of David's seed. Moreover, these words in the Epistle to the Hebrews concerning the ancient believers, "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect,"[2] will be endangered, if these believers have been already established in that incorruptible resurrection-state which is promised to us when we are to be made perfect at the end of the world.

CHAP. IV. 10. You perceive, therefore, how intricate is the question why Peter chose to mention, as persons to whom, when shut up in prison, the gospel was preached, those only who were unbelieving in the days of Noah when the ark was a preparing—and also the difficulties which prevent me from pronouncing any definite opinion on the subject. An additional reason for my hesitation is, that after the apostle had said, "Which baptism now by a like figure saves you (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is on the right hand of God, having swallowed up death that we might be made heirs of eternal life; and having gone into heaven, angels, and authorities, and powers

[1] Acts ii. 28. [2] Heb. xi. 40.

being made subject to Him," he added: "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God;" after which he continues: "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you; who shall give account to Him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead." After these words he subjoins: "For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit."[1]

11. Who can be otherwise than perplexed by words so profound as these? He saith, "The gospel was preached to the dead;" and if by the "dead" we understand persons who have departed from the body, I suppose he must mean those described above as "unbelieving in the days of Noah," or certainly all those whom Christ found in hell. What, then, is meant by the words, "That they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit"? For how can they be judged in the flesh, which if they be in hell they no longer have, and which if they have been loosed from the pains of hell they have not yet resumed? For even if "hell was," as you put in your question, "emptied," it is not to be believed that all who were then there have risen again in the flesh, or those who, arising, again appeared with the Lord resumed the flesh for this purpose, that they might be in it judged according to men; but how this could be taken as true in the case of those who were unbelieving in the days of Noah I do not see, for Scripture does not affirm that they were made to live in the flesh, nor can it be believed that the end for which they were loosed from the pains of hell was that they who were delivered from these might resume their flesh in order to suffer punishment. What, then, is meant by

[1] 1 Pet. iv. 1 6.

the words, "That they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit?" Can it mean that to those whom Christ found in hell this was granted, that by the gospel they were quickened in the spirit, although at the future resurrection they must be judged in the flesh, that they may pass, through some punishment in the flesh, into the kingdom of God? If this be what is meant, why were only the unbelievers of the time of Noah (and not also all others whom Christ found in hell when He went thither) quickened in spirit by the preaching of the gospel, to be afterwards judged in the flesh with a punishment of limited duration? But if we take this as applying to all, the question still remains why Peter mentioned none but those who were unbelieving in the days of Noah.

12. I find, moreover, a difficulty in the reason alleged by those who attempt to give an explanation of this matter. They say that all those who were found in hell when Christ descended thither had never heard the gospel, and that that place of punishment or imprisonment was emptied of all these, because the gospel was not published to the whole world in their lifetime, and they had sufficient excuse for not believing that which had never been proclaimed to them; but that thenceforth, men despising the gospel when it was in all nations fully published and spread abroad would be inexcusable, and therefore after the prison was then emptied there still remains a just judgment, in which those who are contumacious and unbelieving shall be punished even with eternal fire. Those who hold this opinion do not consider that the same excuse is available for all those who have, even after Christ's resurrection, departed this life before the gospel came to them. For even after the Lord came back from hell, it was not the case that no one was from that time forward permitted to go to hell without having heard the gospel, seeing that multitudes throughout the world died before the proclamation of its tidings came to them, all of whom are entitled to plead the excuse which is alleged to have been taken away from those of whom it is said, that because they had not before heard the gospel, the Lord when He descended into hell proclaimed it to them.

13. This objection may perhaps be met by saying that those also who since the Lord's resurrection have died or are now dying without the gospel having been proclaimed to them, may have heard it or may now hear it where they are, in hell, so that there they may believe what ought to be believed concerning the truth of Christ, and may also have that pardon and salvation which those to whom Christ preached obtained; for the fact that Christ ascended again from hell is no reason why the report concerning Him should have perished from recollection there, for from this earth also He has gone ascending into heaven, and yet by the publication of His gospel those who believe in Him shall be saved; moreover, He was exalted, and received a name that is above every name, for this end, that in His name every knee should bow, not only of things in heaven and on earth, but also of things under the earth.[1] But if we accept this opinion, according to which we are warranted in supposing that men who did not believe while they were in life can in hell believe in Christ, who can bear the contradictions both of reason and faith which must follow? In the first place, if this were true, we should seem to have no reason for mourning over those who have departed from the body without that grace, and there would be no ground for being solicitous and using urgent exhortation that men would accept the grace of God before they die, lest they should be punished with eternal death. If, again, it be alleged that in hell those only believe to no purpose and in vain who refused to accept here on earth the gospel preached to them, but that believing will profit those who never despised a gospel which they never had it in their power to hear, another still more absurd consequence is involved, namely, that forasmuch as all men shall certainly die, and ought to come to hell wholly free from the guilt of having despised the gospel, since otherwise it can be of no use to them to believe it when they come there, the gospel ought not to be preached on earth,—a sentiment not less foolish than profane.

CHAP. V. 14. Wherefore let us most firmly hold that which faith, resting on authority established beyond all question,

[1] Infernorum. Phil. ii. 9.

maintains: "that Christ died according to the Scriptures," and that "He was buried," and that "He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures," and all other things which have been written concerning Him in records fully demonstrated to be true. Among these doctrines we include the doctrine that He was in hell, and, having loosed the pains of hell, in which it was impossible for Him to be holden, from which also He is with good ground believed to have loosed and delivered whom He would, He took again to Himself that body which He had left on the cross, and which had been laid in the tomb. These things, I say, let us firmly hold; but as to the question propounded by you from the words of the Apostle Peter, since you now perceive the difficulties which I find in it, and since other difficulties may possibly be found if the subject be more carefully studied, let us continue to investigate it, whether by applying our own thoughts to the subject, or by asking the opinion of any one whom it may be becoming and possible to consult.

15. Consider, however, I pray you, whether all that the Apostle Peter says concerning spirits shut up in prison, who were unbelieving in the days of Noah, may not after all have been written without any reference to hell, but rather to those times the typical character of which he has transferred to the present time. For that transaction had been typical of future events, so that those who do not believe the gospel in our age, when the Church is being built up in all nations, may be understood to be like those who did not believe in that age while the ark was a preparing; also, that those who have believed and are saved by baptism may be compared to those who at that time, being in the ark, were saved by water; wherefore he says, "So baptism by a like figure saves you." Let us therefore interpret the rest of the statements concerning them that believed not so as to harmonise with the analogy of the figure, and refuse to entertain the thought that the gospel was once preached, or is even to this hour being preached in hell in order to make men believe and be delivered from its pains, as if a Church had been established there as well as on earth.

16. Those who have inferred from the words, "He preached

to the spirits in prison," that Peter held the opinion which perplexes you, seem to me to have been drawn to this interpretation by imagining that the term "spirits" could not be applied to designate souls which were at that time still in the bodies of men, and which, being shut up in the darkness of ignorance, were, so to speak, "in prison,"—a prison such as that from which the Psalmist sought deliverance in the prayer, "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Thy name;"[1] which is in another place called the "shadow of death,"[2] from which deliverance was granted, not certainly in hell, but in this world, to those of whom it is written, "They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."[3] But to the men of Noah's time the gospel was preached in vain, because they believed not when God's long-suffering waited for them during the many years in which the ark was being built (for the building of the ark was itself in a certain sense a preaching of mercy); even as now men similar to them are unbelieving, who, to use the same figure, are shut up in the darkness of ignorance as in a prison, beholding in vain the Church which is being built up throughout the world, while judgment is impending, as the flood was by which at that time all the unbelieving perished; for the Lord says: "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man; they did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all."[4] But because that transaction was also a type of a future event, that flood was a type both of baptism to believers and of destruction to unbelievers, as in that figure in which, not by a transaction but by words, two things are predicted concerning Christ, when He is represented in Scripture as a stone which was destined to be both to unbelievers a stone of stumbling, and to believers a foundation-stone.[5] Occasionally, however, also in the same figure, whether it be in the form of a typical event or of a parable, two things are used to represent one, as believers were represented both by

[1] Ps. cxlii. 7. [2] Ps. cvii. 14. [3] Isa. ix. 2. [4] Luke xvii. 26, 27.
[5] Ps. cxviii. 22; Isa. viii. 14, xxviii. 16; Dan. ii. 34, 45; Matt. xxi. 44; Luke xx. 17; Acts iv. 11; Rom. ix. 33, etc.

the timbers of which the ark was built and by the eight souls saved in the ark, and as in the gospel similitude of the sheepfold Christ is both the shepherd and the door.[1]

CHAP. VI. 17. And let it not be regarded as an objection to the interpretation now given, that the Apostle Peter says that Christ Himself preached to men shut up in prison who were unbelieving in the days of Noah, as if we must consider this interpretation inconsistent with the fact that at that time Christ had not come. For although He had not yet come in the flesh, as He came when afterwards He "showed Himself upon earth, and conversed with men,"[2] nevertheless He certainly came often to this earth, from the beginning of the human race, whether to rebuke the wicked, as Cain, and, before that, Adam and his wife, when they sinned, or to comfort the good, or to admonish both, so that some should to their salvation believe, others should to their condemnation refuse to believe,—coming then not in the flesh but in the spirit, speaking by suitable manifestations of Himself to such persons and in such manner as seemed good to Him. As to this expression, "He came in the spirit," surely He, as the Son of God, is a Spirit in the essence of His Deity, for that is not corporeal; but what is at any time done by the Son without the Holy Spirit, or without the Father, seeing that all the works of the Trinity are inseparable?

18. The words of Scripture which are under consideration seem to me of themselves to make this sufficiently plain to those who carefully attend to them: "For Christ hath died once for our sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit: in which also He came and preached unto the spirits in prison, who sometime were unbelieving, when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing." The order of the words is now, I suppose, carefully noted by you: "Christ being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit;" in which spirit He came and preached also to those spirits who had once in the days of Noah refused to believe His word; since before He came in the flesh to die for us, which He did once, He often came in the spirit, to whom

[1] John x. 1, 2.

[2] Baruch iii. 37.

He would, by visions instructing them as He would, coming to them assuredly in the same spirit in which He was quickened when He was put to death in the flesh in His passion. Now what does His being quickened in the spirit mean if not this, that the same flesh in which alone He had experienced death rose from the dead by the quickening Spirit?

CHAP. VII. 19. For who will dare to say that Jesus was put to death in His soul, *i.e.* in the spirit which belonged to Him as man, since the only death which the soul can experience is sin, from which He was absolutely free when for us He was put to death in the flesh? For if the souls of all men are derived from that one which the breath of God gave to the first man, by whom "sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men,"[1] either the soul of Christ is not derived from the same source as other souls, because He had absolutely no sin, either original or personal, on account of which death could be supposed to be merited by Him, since He paid on our behalf that which was not on His own account due by Him, in whom the prince of this world, who had the power of death, found nothing[2]—and there is nothing unreasonable in the supposition that He who created a soul for the first man should create a soul for Himself; or if the soul of Christ be derived from Adam's soul, He, in assuming it to Himself, cleansed it so that when He came into this world He was born of the Virgin perfectly free from sin either actual or transmitted. If, however, the souls of men are not derived from that one soul, and it is only by the flesh that original sin is transmitted from Adam, the Son of God created a soul for Himself, as He creates souls for all other men, but He united it not to sinful flesh, but to the "likeness of sinful flesh."[3] For He took, indeed, from the Virgin the true substance of flesh; not, however, "sinful flesh," for it was neither begotten nor conceived through carnal concupiscence, but mortal, and capable of change in the successive stages of life, as being like unto sinful flesh in all points, sin excepted.

20. Therefore, whatever be the true theory concerning the origin of souls,—and on this I feel it would be rash for me to

[1] Rom. v. 12. [2] John xiv. 30. [3] Rom. viii. 3.

pronounce, meanwhile, any opinion beyond utterly rejecting the theory which affirms that each soul is thrust into the body which it inhabits as into a prison, where it expiates some former actions of its own of which I know nothing,—it is certain, regarding the soul of Christ, not only that it is, according to the nature of all souls, immortal, but also that it was neither put to death by sin nor punished by condemnation, the only two ways in which death can be understood as experienced by the soul; and therefore it could not be said of Christ that with reference to the soul He was "quickened in the spirit." For He was quickened in that in which He had been put to death; this, therefore, is spoken with reference to His flesh, for His flesh received life again when the soul returned to it, as it also had died when the soul departed. He was therefore said to be "put to death in the flesh," because He experienced death only in the flesh, but "quickened in the spirit," because by the operation of that Spirit in which He was wont to come and preach to whom He would, that same flesh in which He came to men was quickened and rose from the grave.

21. Wherefore, passing now to the words which we find farther on concerning unbelievers, "Who shall give account to Him who is ready to judge the quick and the dead," there is no necessity for our understanding the "dead" here to be those who have departed from the body. For it may be that the apostle intended by the word "dead" to denote unbelievers, as being spiritually dead, like those of whom it was said, "Let the dead bury their dead,"[1] and by the word "living" to denote those who believe in Him, having not heard in vain the call, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light;"[2] of whom also the Lord said: "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live."[3] On the same principle of interpretation, also, there is nothing compelling us to understand the immediately succeeding words of Peter—"For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit"[4]—as describing what has been done in hell. "For for this cause has the gospel

[1] Matt. viii. 22. [2] Eph. v. 14. [3] John v. 25. [4] 1 Pet. iv. 6.

been preached" in this life "to the dead," that is, to the unbelieving wicked, "that" when they believed "they might be judged according to men in the flesh,"—that is, by means of various afflictions and by the death of the body itself; for which reason the same apostle says in another place: "The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God,"[1]—"but live according to God in the spirit," since in that same spirit they had been dead while they were held prisoners in the death of unbelief and wickedness.

22. If this exposition of the words of Peter offend any one, or, without offending, at least fail to satisfy any one, let him attempt to interpret them on the supposition that they refer to hell; and if he succeed in solving my difficulties, which I have mentioned above, so as to remove the perplexity which they occasion, let him communicate his interpretation to me; and if this were done, the words might possibly have been intended to be understood in both ways, but the view which I have propounded is not thereby shown to be false.

I wrote and sent by the deacon Asellus a letter, which I suppose you have received, giving such answers as I could to the questions which you sent before, excepting the one concerning the vision of God by the bodily senses, on which a larger treatise must be attempted. In your last note, to which this is a reply, you propounded two questions concerning certain words of the Apostle Peter, and concerning the soul of the Lord, both of which I have discussed,—the former more fully, the latter briefly.[2] I beg you not to grudge the trouble of sending me another copy of the letter containing the question whether it is possible for the substance of the Deity to be seen in a bodily form as limited to place; for it has, I know not how, gone amissing here, and, though long sought for, has not been found.

[1] 1 Pet. iv. 17. [2] See paragraphs 19 and 20.

LETTER CLXV.

(A.D. 410.[1])

TO MY TRULY PIOUS LORDS MARCELLINUS[2] AND ANAPSYCHIA, SONS WORTHY OF BEING ESTEEMED WITH ALL THE LOVE DUE TO THEIR POSITION, JEROME SENDS GREETING IN CHRIST.

CHAP. I. 1. At last I have received your joint letter from Africa, and I do not regret the importunity with which, though you were silent, I persevered in sending letters to you, that I might obtain a reply, and learn, not through report from others, but from your own most welcome statement, that you are in health. I have not forgotten the brief query, or rather the very important theological[3] question, which you propounded in regard to the origin of the soul,—does it descend from heaven, as the philosopher Pythagoras and all the Platonists and Origen think? or is it part of the essence of the Deity, as the Stoics, Manichæus, and the Priscillianists of Spain imagine? or are souls kept in a divine treasure-house wherein they were stored of old, as some ecclesiastics, foolishly misled, believe? or are they daily created by God and sent into bodies, according to what is written in the gospel, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work"?[4] or are souls really produced, as Tertullian, Apollinaris, and the majority of the Western divines conjecture, by propagation, so that as the body is the offspring of body, the soul is the offspring of soul, and exists on conditions similar to those regulating the existence of the inferior animals?[5] I know that I have published my opinion on this question in my brief writings against Ruffinus, in reply to a treatise addressed by him to Anastasius, of holy memory, bishop of the Roman Church, in which, while attempting to impose upon the simplicity of his readers by a slippery and artful, yet withal foolish confession, he exposed to contempt his own faith, or, rather, his own perfidy. These books are,

[1] In assigning this place to Jerome's letter to Marcellinus and Anapsychia, the Benedictine editors have departed from the chronological sequence in order to place it in immediate juxtaposition to Letter CLXVI., written by Augustine to Jerome some years later on the subject mentioned in sec. 1.

[2] See note on Marcellinus in Letter CXXXIII. p. 168. [3] Ecclesiastica.

[4] John v. 17. [5] Et simili cum brutis animantibus conditione subsistat.

I think, in the possession of your holy kinsman Oceanus, for they were published long ago to meet the calumnies contained in numerous writings of Ruffinus. Be this as it may, you have in Africa that holy man and learned bishop Augustine, who will be able to teach you on this subject *viva voce*, as the saying is, and expound to you his opinion, or, I should rather say, my own opinion stated in his words.

Chap. II. 2. I have long wished to begin the volume of Ezekiel, and fulfil a promise frequently made to studious readers; but at the time when I had just begun to dictate the proposed exposition, my mind was so much agitated by the devastation of the western provinces of the empire, and especially by the sack of Rome itself by the barbarians, that, to use a common proverbial phrase, I scarcely knew my own name; and for a long while I was silent, knowing that it was a time for tears. Moreover, when I had, in the course of this year, prepared three books of the *Commentary*, a sudden furious invasion of the barbarous tribes mentioned by your Virgil as "the widely roaming Barcæi,"[1] and by sacred Scripture in the words concerning Ishmael, "He shall dwell in the presence of his brethren,"[2] swept over the whole of Egypt, Palestine, Phenice, and Syria, carrying all before them with the vehemence of a mighty torrent, so that it was only with the greatest difficulty that we were enabled, by the mercy of Christ, to escape their hands. But if, as a famous orator has said, "Laws are silent amid the clash of arms,"[3] how much more may this be said of scriptural studies, which demand a multitude of books and silence, together with uninterrupted diligence of amanuenses, and especially the enjoyment of tranquillity and leisure by those who dictate! I have accordingly sent two books to my holy daughter Fabiola, of which, if you wish copies, you may borrow them from her. Through lack of time I have been unable to transcribe others; when you have read these, and have seen the portico, as it were, you may easily conjecture what the house itself is designed to be. But I trust in the mercy of God, who has helped me in the very difficult commencement of the foresaid work, that He will help me also in the predictions

[1] "Lateque vagantes Barcæi."—Virg. *Æneid*, iv. 48. [2] Gen. xvi. 12.
[3] Cicero *pro Milone*: "Leges inter arma silent."

concerning the wars of Gog and Magog, which occupy the last division but one of the prophecy,[1] and in the concluding portion itself, describing the building, the details, and the proportions of that most holy and mysterious temple.[2]

CHAP. III. 3. Our holy brother Oceanus, to whom you desire to be mentioned, is a man of such gifts and character, and so profoundly learned in the law of the Lord, that he may probably give you instruction without any request of mine, and can impart to you on all scriptural questions the opinion which, according to the measure of our joint abilities, we have formed.

May Christ, our almighty God, keep you, my truly pious lords, in safety and prosperity to a good old age!

LETTER CLXVI.

(A.D. 415.)

A TREATISE ON THE ORIGIN OF THE HUMAN SOUL, ADDRESSED TO JEROME.[3]

CHAP. I. 1. Unto our God, who hath called us unto His

[1] Ezek. ch. xxxviii.–xxxix. [2] *Ibid.* ch. xl.–xliii.

[3] The following passage from the *Retractations of Augustine* (Book ii. ch. xlv.) is quoted by the Benedictine Fathers as a preface to this letter and the one immediately succeeding:—"I wrote also two books to Presbyter Jerome, the recluse of Bethelem [sedentem in Bethlehem]; the one on the origin of the human soul, the other on the sentence of the Apostle James, 'Whosoever shall keep the whole law and offend in one point, he is guilty of all' (Jas. ii. 10), asking his opinion on both subjects. In the former letter I did not give any answer of my own to the question which I proposed; in the latter I did not keep back what seemed to me the best way to solve the question, but asked whether the same solution commended itself to his judgment. He wrote in return, expressing approbation of my submitting the questions to him, but saying that he had not leisure to send me a reply. So long as he lived, therefore, I refused to give these books to the world, lest he should perhaps at any time reply to them, in which case I would have rather published them along with his answer. After his decease, however, I published them,—the former, in order to admonish any who read it, either to forbear altogether from inquiring into the manner in which a soul is given to infants at the time of birth, or, at all events, in a matter so involved in obscurity, to accept only such a solution of the question as does not contradict the clearest truths which the Catholic faith confesses in regard to original sin in infants, as undoubtedly doomed to perdition unless they be regenerated in Christ; the latter in order that what seemed to us the true answer to

kingdom and glory,[1] I have prayed, and pray now, that what I write to you, holy brother Jerome, asking your opinion in regard to things of which I am ignorant, may by His good pleasure be profitable to us both. For although in addressing you I consult one much older than myself, nevertheless I also am becoming old; but I cannot think that it is at any time of life too late to learn what we need to know, because, although it is more fitting that old men should be teachers than learners, it is nevertheless more fitting for them to learn than to continue ignorant of that which they should teach to others. I assure you that, amid the many disadvantages which I have to submit to in studying very difficult questions, there is none which grieves me more than the circumstance of separation from your Charity by a distance so great that I can scarcely send a letter to you, and scarcely receive one from you, even at intervals, not of days nor of months, but of several years; whereas my desire would be, if it were possible, to have you daily beside me, as one with whom I could converse on any theme. Nevertheless, although I have not been able to do all that I wished, I am not the less bound to do all that I can.

2. Behold, a religious young man has come to me, by name Orosius, who is in the bond of Catholic peace a brother, in point of age a son, and in honour a fellow presbyter,—a man of quick understanding, ready speech, and burning zeal, desiring to be in the Lord's house a vessel rendering useful service in refuting those false and pernicious doctrines, through which the souls of men in Spain have suffered much more grievous wounds than have been inflicted on their bodies by the sword of barbarians. For from the remote western coast of Spain he has come with eager haste to us, having been prompted to do this by the report that from me he could learn whatever he wished on the subjects on which he desired information. Nor has his coming been altogether in vain. In the first place, he has learned not to believe all that report affirmed of me: in the next place, I have taught him all that I could, and, as for the things in which I could not teach him, I have told him

the question therein discussed might be known. The work begins with the words, 'Deum nostrum qui nos vocavit.'"

[1] 1 Thess. ii. 12.

from whom he may learn them, and have exhorted him to go on to you. As he received this counsel or rather injunction of mine with pleasure, and with intention to comply with it, I asked him to visit us on his way home to his own country when he comes from you. On receiving his promise to this effect, I believed that the Lord had granted me an opportunity of writing to you regarding certain things which I wish through you to learn. For I was seeking some one whom I might send to you, and it was not easy to fall in with one qualified both by trustworthiness in performing and by alacrity in undertaking the work, as well as by experience in travelling. Therefore, when I became acquainted with this young man, I could not doubt that he was exactly such a person as I was asking from the Lord.

CHAP. II. 3. Allow me, therefore, to bring before you a subject which I beseech you not to refuse to open up and discuss with me. Many are perplexed by questions concerning the soul, and I confess that I myself am of this number. I shall in this letter, in the first place, state explicitly the things regarding the soul which I most assuredly believe, and shall, in the next place, bring forward the things regarding which I am still desirous of explanation.

The soul of man is in a sense proper to itself immortal. It is not absolutely immortal, as God is, of whom it is written that He "alone hath immortality,"[1] for Holy Scripture makes mention of deaths to which the soul is liable—as in the saying, "Let the dead bury their dead;"[2] but, because when alienated from the life of God it so dies as not wholly to cease from living in its own nature, it is found to be from a certain cause mortal, yet so as to be not without reason called at the same time immortal.

The soul is not a part of God. For if it were, it would be absolutely immutable and incorruptible, in which case it could neither go downward to be worse, nor go onward to be better; nor could it either begin to have anything in itself which it had not before, or cease to have anything which it had within the sphere of its own experience. But how different the actual facts of the case are is a point requiring no evidence

[1] 1 Tim. vi. 16. [2] Matt. viii. 22.

from without, it is acknowledged by every one who consults his own consciousness. In vain, moreover, is it pled by those who affirm that the soul is a part of God, that the corruption and baseness which we see in the worst of men, and the weakness and blemishes which we see in all men, come to it not from the soul itself, but from the body; for what matters it whence the infirmity originates in that which, if it were indeed immutable, could not, from any quarter whatever, be made infirm? For that which is truly immutable and incorruptible is not liable to mutation or corruption by any influence whatever from without, else the invulnerability which the fable ascribed to the flesh of Achilles would be nothing peculiar to him, but the property of every man, so long as no accident befell him. That which is liable to be changed in any manner, by any cause, or in any part whatever, is therefore not by nature immutable; but it were impiety to think of God as otherwise than truly and supremely immutable: therefore the soul is not a part of God.

4. That the soul is immaterial is a fact of which I avow myself to be fully persuaded, although men of slow understanding are hard to be convinced that it is so. To secure myself, however, from either unnecessarily causing to others or unreasonably bringing upon myself a controversy about an expression, let me say that, since the thing itself is beyond question, it is needless to contend about mere terms. If matter be used as a term denoting everything which in any form has a separate existence, whether it be called an essence, or a substance, or by another name, the soul is material. Again, if you choose to apply the epithet immaterial only to that nature which is supremely immutable and is everywhere present in its entirety, the soul is material, for it is not at all endowed with such qualities. But if matter be used to designate nothing but that which, whether at rest or in motion, has some length, breadth, and height, so that with a greater part of itself it occupies a greater part of space, and with a smaller part a smaller space, and is in every part of it less than the whole, then the soul is not material. For it pervades the whole body which it animates, not by a local distribution of parts, but by a certain vital influence, being at the same moment present in

its entirety in all parts of the body, and not less in smaller parts and greater in larger parts, but here with more energy and there with less energy, it is in its entirety present both in the whole body and in every part of it. For even that which the mind perceives in only a part of the body is nevertheless not otherwise perceived than by the whole mind; for when any part of the living flesh is touched by a fine-pointed instrument, although the place affected is not only not the whole body, but scarcely discernible in its surface, the contact does not escape the entire mind, and yet the contact is felt not over the whole body, but only at the one point where it takes place. How comes it, then, that what takes place in only a part of the body is immediately known to the whole mind, unless the whole mind is present at that part, and at the same time not deserting all the other parts of the body in order to be present in its entirety at this one? For all the other parts of the body in which no such contact takes place are still living by the soul being present with them. And if a similar contact takes place in the other parts, and the contact occur in both parts simultaneously, it would in both cases alike be known at the same moment to the whole mind. Now this presence of the mind in all parts of the body at the same moment, so that in every part of the body the whole mind is at the same moment present, would be impossible if it were distributed over these parts in the same way as we see matter distributed in space, occupying less space with a smaller portion of itself, and greater space with a greater portion. If, therefore, mind is to be called material, it is not material in the same sense as earth, water, air, and ether are material. For all things composed of these elements are larger in larger places, or smaller in smaller places, and none of them is in its entirety present at any part of itself, but the dimensions of the material substances are according to the dimensions of the space occupied. Whence it is perceived that the soul, whether it be termed material or immaterial, has a certain nature of its own, created from a substance superior to the elements of this world,—a substance which cannot be truly conceived of by any representation of the material images perceived by the bodily senses, but which is apprehended by the understanding and discovered to our

consciousness by its living energy. These things I am stating, not with the view of teaching you what you already know, but in order that I may declare explicitly what I hold as indisputably certain concerning the soul, lest any one should think, when I come to state the questions to which I desire answers, that I hold none of the doctrines which we have learned from science or from revelation concerning the soul.

5. I am, moreover, fully persuaded that the soul has fallen into sin, not through the fault of God, nor through any necessity either in the divine nature or in its own, but by its own free will; and that it can be delivered from the body of this death neither by the strength of its own will, as if that were in itself sufficient to achieve this, nor by the death of the body itself, but only by the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ;[1] and that there is not one soul in the human family to whose salvation the one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, is not absolutely necessary. Every soul, moreover, which may at any age whatsoever depart from this life without the grace of the Mediator and the sacrament of this grace, departs to future punishment, and shall receive again its own body at the last judgment as a partner in punishment. But if the soul after its natural generation, which was derived from Adam, be regenerated in Christ, it belongs to His fellowship,[2] and shall not only have rest after the death of the body, but also receive again its own body as a partner in glory. These are truths concerning the soul which I hold most firmly.

CHAP. III. 6. Permit me now, therefore, to bring before you the question which I desire to have solved, and do not reject me; so may He not reject you who condescended to be rejected for our sakes!

I ask where can the soul, even of an infant snatched away by death, have contracted the guilt which, unless the grace of Christ has come to the rescue by that sacrament of baptism which is administered even to infants, involves it in condemnation? I know you are not one of those who have begun of late to utter certain new and absurd opinions, alleging that there is no guilt derived from Adam which is removed by

[1] Rom. vii. 24, 25. [2] We read *pertinere*, not *pertinens*.

baptism in the case of infants. If I knew that you held this view, or, rather, if I did not know that you reject it, I would certainly neither address this question to you, nor think that it ought to be put to you at all. Since, however, we hold on this subject the opinion consonant with the immoveable Catholic faith, which you have yourself expressed when, refuting the absurd sayings of Jovinian, you have quoted this sentence from the book of Job: "In thy sight no one is clean, not even the infant, whose time of life on earth is a single day,"[1] adding, "for we are held guilty in the similitude of Adam's transgression,"[2]—an opinion which your book on Jonah's prophecy declares in a notable and lucid manner, where you affirm that the little children of Nineveh were justly compelled to fast along with the people, because merely of their original sin,[3]—it is not unsuitable that I should address to you the question—where has the soul contracted the guilt from which, even at that age, it must be delivered by the sacrament of Christian grace?

7. Some years ago, when I wrote certain books concerning *Free Will*, which have gone forth into the hands of many, and are now in the possession of very many readers, after referring to these four opinions as to the manner of the soul's incarnation,—(1) that all other souls are derived from the one which was given to the first man; (2) that for each individual a new soul is made; (3) that souls already in existence somewhere are sent by divine act into the bodies; or (4) glide into them of their own accord,—I thought that it was necessary to treat them in such a way that, whichever of them might be true, the decision should not hinder the object which I had in view when contending with all my might against those who attempt to lay upon God the blame of a nature endowed with its own principle of evil, namely, the Manichæans;[4] for at that time I had not heard of the Priscillianists, who utter blasphemies not very dissimilar to these. As to the fifth opinion, namely, that the soul is a part of God,—an opinion which, in order to omit none, you have mentioned along with the rest in your letter to Marcellinus (a man of

[1] Job. xiv. 4, 5, according to LXX.
[2] Jerome *against Jovinian*. Book ii.
[3] Jerome *on Jonah*, ch. iii.
[4] *De Libero Arbitrio*, iii. 21.

pious memory and very dear to us in the grace of Christ), who had consulted you on this question,[1]—I did not add it to the others for two reasons,—first, because, in examining this opinion, we discuss not the incarnation of the soul, but its nature; secondly, because this is the view held by those against whom I was arguing, and the main design of my argument was to prove that the blameless and inviolable nature of the Creator has nothing to do with the faults and blemishes of the creature, while they, on their part, maintained that the substance of the good God itself is, in so far as it is led captive, corrupted and oppressed and brought under a necessity of sinning by the substance of evil, to which they ascribe a proper dominion and principalities. Leaving, therefore, out of the question this heretical error, I desire to know which of the other four opinions we ought to choose. For whichever of them may justly claim our preference, far be it from us to assail this article of faith, about which we have no uncertainty, that every soul, even the soul of an infant, requires to be delivered from the binding guilt of sin, and that there is no deliverance except through Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

CHAP. IV. 8. To avoid prolixity, therefore, let me refer to the opinion which you, I believe, entertain, viz. that God even now makes each soul for each individual at the time of birth. To meet the objection to this view which might be taken from the fact that God finished the whole work of creation on the sixth day and rested on the seventh day, you quote the testimony of the words in the gospel, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."[2] This you have written in your letter to Marcellinus, in which letter, moreover, you have most kindly condescended to mention my name, saying that he had me here in Africa, who could more easily explain to him the opinion held by you.[3] But had I been able to do this, he would not have applied for instruction to you, who were so remote from him, though perhaps he did not write from Africa to you. For I know not when he wrote it; I only know that he knew well my hesitation to embrace any definite view on this subject, for which reason he preferred to write to you without consulting me. Yet, even if he had

[1] Letter CLXV. [2] John v. 17. [3] See Letter CLXV. p. 294.

consulted me, I would rather have encouraged him to write to you, and would have expressed my gratitude for the benefit which might have been conferred on us all, had you not preferred to send a brief note, instead of a full reply, doing this, I suppose, to save yourself from unnecessary expenditure of effort in a place where I, whom you supposed to be thoroughly acquainted with the subject of his inquiries, was at hand. Behold, I am willing that the opinion which you hold should be also mine; but I assure you that as yet I have not embraced it.

9. You have sent to me scholars, to whom you wish me to impart what I have not yet learned myself. Teach me, therefore, what I am to teach them; for many urge me vehemently to be a teacher on this subject, and to them I confess that of this, as well as of many other things, I am ignorant, and perhaps, though they maintain a respectful demeanour in my presence, they say among themselves: "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?"[1]—a rebuke which the Lord gave to one who belonged to the class of men who delighted in being called Rabbi; which was also the reason of his coming by night to the true Teacher, because perchance he, who had been accustomed to teach, blushed to take the learner's place. But, for my own part, it gives me much more pleasure to hear instruction from another, than to be myself listened to as a teacher. For I remember what He said to those whom, above all men, He had chosen: "But be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your master, even Christ."[2] Nor was it any other teacher who taught Moses by Jethro,[3] Cornelius by Peter the earlier apostle,[4] and Peter himself by Paul the later apostle;[5] for by whomsoever truth is spoken, it is spoken by the gift of Him who is the Truth. What if the reason of our still being ignorant of these things, and of our having failed to discover them, even after praying, reading, thinking, and reasoning, be this: that full proof may be made not only of the love with which we give instruction to the ignorant, but also of the humility with which we receive instruction from the learned?

[1] John iii. 10. [2] Matt. xxiii. 8. [3] Ex. xviii. 14–25.
[4] Acts x. 25–48. [5] Gal. ii. 11–21.

10. Teach me, therefore, I beseech you, what I may teach to others; teach me what I ought to hold as my own opinion; and tell me this: if souls are from day to day made for each individual separately at birth, where, in the case of infant children, is sin committed by these souls, so that they require the remission of sin in the sacrament of Christ, because of sinning in Adam from whom the sinful flesh has been derived? or if they do not sin, how is it compatible with the justice of the Creator, that, because of their being united to mortal members derived from another, they are so brought under the bond of the sin of that other, that unless they be rescued by the Church, perdition overtakes them, although it is not in their own power to secure that they be rescued by the grace of baptism? Where, therefore, is the justice of the condemnation of so many thousands of souls, which in the deaths of infant children leave this world without the benefit of the Christian sacrament, if being newly created they have, not through any preceding sin of their own, but by the will of the Creator, become severally united to the individual bodies to animate which they were created and bestowed by Him, who certainly knew that every one of them was destined, not through any fault of its own, to leave the body without receiving the baptism of Christ? Seeing, therefore, that we may not say concerning God either that He compels them to become sinners, or that He punishes innocent souls—and seeing that, on the other hand, it is not lawful for us to deny that nothing else than perdition is the doom of the souls, even of little children, which have departed from the body without the sacrament of Christ, tell me, I implore you, where anything can be found to support the opinion that souls are not all derived from that one soul of the first man, but are each created separately for each individual, as Adam's soul was made for him.

CHAP. V. 11. As for some other objections which are advanced against this opinion, I think that I could easily dispose of them. For example, some think that they urge a conclusive argument against this opinion when they ask, how God finished all His works on the sixth day and rested on

the seventh day,[1] if He is still creating new souls. If we meet them with the quotation from the gospel (given by you in the letter to Marcellinus already mentioned), "My Father worketh hitherto," they answer that He "worketh" in maintaining those natures which He has created, not in creating new natures; otherwise, this statement would contradict the words of Scripture in Genesis, where it is most plainly declared that God finished all His works. Moreover, the words of Scripture, that He rested, are unquestionably to be understood of His resting from creating new creatures, not from governing those which He had created; for at that time He made things which previously did not exist, and from making these He rested because He had finished all the creatures which before they existed He saw necessary to be created, so that thenceforward He did not create and make things which previously did not exist, but made and fashioned out of things already existing whatever He did make. Thus the statements, "He rested from His works," and, "He worketh hitherto," are both true, for the gospel could not contradict Genesis.

12. When, however, these things are brought forward by persons who advance them as conclusive against the opinion that God now creates new souls as He created the soul of the first man, and who hold either that He forms them from that one soul which existed before He rested from creation, or that He now sends them forth into bodies from some reservoir or storehouse of souls which He then created, it is easy to turn aside their argument by answering, that even in the six days God formed many things out of those natures which He had already created,—as, for example, the birds and fishes were formed from the waters, and the trees, the grass, and the animals from the earth,—and yet it is undeniable that He was then making things which did not exist before. For there existed previously no bird, no fish, no tree, no animal, and it is clearly understood that He rested from creating those things which previously were not, and were then created, that is to say, He ceased in this sense, that, after that, nothing was made by Him which did not already exist. But if, rejecting the opinions of all who believe either that God sends forth into

[1] Gen. ii. 2.

men souls existing already in some incomprehensible reservoir, or that He makes souls emanate like drops of dew from Himself as particles of His own substance, or that He brings them forth from that one soul of the first man, or that He binds them in the fetters of the bodily members because of sins committed in a prior state of existence,—if, I say, rejecting these, we affirm that for each individual He creates separately a new soul when he is born, we do not herein affirm that He makes anything which He had not already made. For He had already made man after His own image on the sixth day; and this work of His is unquestionably to be understood with reference to the rational soul of man. The same work He still does, not in creating what did not exist, but in multiplying what already existed. Wherefore it is true, on the one hand, that He rested from creating things which previously did not exist, and equally true, on the other hand, that He continues still to work, not only in governing what He has made, but also in making (not anything which did not previously exist, but) a larger number of those creatures which He had already made. Wherefore, either by such an explanation, or by any other which may seem better, we escape from the objection advanced by those who would make the fact that God rested from His works a conclusive argument against our believing that new souls are still being daily created, not from the first soul, but in the same manner as it was made.

13. Again, as for another objection, stated in the question, "Wherefore does He create souls for those whom He knows to be destined to an early death?" we may reply, that by the death of the children the sins of the parents are either reproved or chastised. We may, moreover, with all propriety, leave these things to the disposal of the Lord of all, for we know that He appoints to the succession of events in time, and therefore to the births and deaths of living creatures as included in these, a course which is consummate in beauty and perfect in the arrangement of all its parts; whereas we are not capable of perceiving those things by the perception of which, if it were attainable, we should be soothed with an ineffable, tranquil joy. For not in vain has the prophet, taught by divine inspiration, declared concerning God, "He bringeth

forth in measured harmonies the course of time."[1] For which reason music, the science or capacity of correct harmony, has been given also by the kindness of God to mortals having reasonable souls, with a view to keep them in mind of this great truth. For if a man, when composing a song which is to suit a particular melody, knows how to distribute the length of time allowed to each word so as to make the song flow and pass on in most beautiful adaptation to the ever-changing notes of the melody, how much more shall God, whose wisdom is to be esteemed as infinitely transcending human arts, make infallible provision that not one of the spaces of time allotted to natures that are born and die—spaces which are like the words and syllables of the successive epochs of the course of time—shall have, in what we may call the sublime psalm of the vicissitudes of this world, a duration either more brief or more protracted than the fore-known and predetermined harmony requires! For when I may speak thus with reference even to the leaves of every tree, and the number of the hairs upon our heads, how much more may I say it regarding the birth and death of men, seeing that every man's life on earth continues for a time, which is neither longer nor shorter than God knows to be in harmony with the plan according to which He rules the universe.

14. As to the assertion that everything which has begun to exist in time is incapable of immortality, because all things which are born die, and all things which have grown decay through age, and the opinion which they affirm to follow necessarily from this, viz. that the soul of man must owe its immortality to its having been created before time began, this does not disturb my faith; for, passing over other examples, which conclusively dispose of this assertion, I need only refer to the body of Christ, which now "dieth no more; death shall have no more dominion over it."[2]

15. Moreover, as to your remark in your book against Ruffinus, that some bring forward as against this opinion [that souls are created for each individual separately at birth] the objection that it seems unworthy of God that He should give

[1] Isa. xl. 26; translated by Augustine, "Qui profert numerose sæculam."
[2] Rom. vi. 9.

souls to the offspring of adulterers, and who accordingly attempt to build on this a theory that souls may possibly be incarcerated, as it were, in such bodies, to suffer for the deeds of a life spent in some prior state of being,[1]—this objection does not disturb me, as many things by which it may be answered occur to me when I consider it. The answer which you yourself have given, saying, that in the case of stolen wheat, there is no fault in the grain, but only in him who stole it, and that the earth is not under obligation to refuse to cherish the seed because the sower may have cast it in with a hand defiled by dishonesty, is a most felicitous illustration. But even before I had read it, I felt that to me the objection drawn from the offspring of adulterers caused no serious difficulty when I took a general view of the fact that God brings many good things to light, even out of our evils and our sins. Now, the creation of any living creature compels every one who considers it with piety and wisdom to give to the Creator praise which words cannot express; and if this praise is called forth by the creation of any living creature whatsoever, how much more is it called forth by the creation of a man! If, therefore, the cause of any act of creative power be sought for, no shorter or better reply can be given than that every creature of God is good. And [so far from such an act being unworthy of God] what is more worthy of Him than that He, being good, should make those good things which no one else than God alone can make?

Chap. vi. 16. These things, and others which I can advance, I am accustomed to state, as well as I can, against those who attempt to overthrow by such objections the opinion that souls are made for each individual, as the first man's soul was made for him.

But when we come to the penal sufferings of infants, I am embarrassed, believe me, by great difficulties, and am wholly at a loss to find an answer by which they are solved; and I speak here not only of those punishments in the life to come, which are involved in that perdition to which they must be drawn down if they depart from the body without the sacrament of Christian grace, but also of the sufferings which are to

[1] Hieron. *Adv. Ruffin.* lib. iii.

our sorrow endured by them before our eyes in this present life, and which are so various, that time rather than examples would fail me if I were to attempt to enumerate them. They are liable to wasting disease, to racking pain, to the agonies of thirst and hunger, to feebleness of limbs, to privation of bodily senses, and to vexing assaults of unclean spirits. Surely it is incumbent on us to show how it is compatible with justice that infants suffer all these things without any evil of their own as the procuring cause. For it would be impious to say, either that these things take place without God's knowledge, or that He cannot resist those who cause them, or that He unrighteously does these things, or permits them to be done. We are warranted in saying that irrational animals are given by God to serve creatures possessing a higher nature, even though they be wicked, as we see most plainly in the gospel that the swine of the Gadarenes were given to the legion of devils at their request; but could we ever be warranted in saying this of men? Certainly not. Man is, indeed, an animal, but an animal endowed with reason, though mortal. In his members dwells a reasonable soul, which in these severe afflictions is enduring a penalty. Now God is good, God is just, God is omnipotent—none but a madman would doubt that He is so; let the great sufferings, therefore, which infant children experience be accounted for by some reason compatible with justice. When older people suffer such trials, we are accustomed, certainly, to say, either that their worth is being proved, as in Job's case, or that their wickedness is being punished, as in Herod's; and from some examples, which it has pleased God to make perfectly clear, men are enabled to conjecture the nature of others which are more obscure; but this is in regard to persons of mature age. Tell me, therefore, what we must answer in regard to infant children; is it true that, although they suffer so great punishments, there are no sins in them deserving to be punished? for, of course, there is not in them at that age any righteousness requiring to be put to the proof.

17. What shall I say, moreover, as to the [difficulty which besets the theory of the creation of each soul separately at the birth of the individual in connection with the] diversity of talent in different souls, and especially the absolute privation

of reason in some? This is, indeed, not apparent in the first stages of infancy, but being developed continuously from the beginning of life, it becomes manifest in children, of whom some are so slow and defective in memory that they cannot learn even the letters of the alphabet, and some (commonly called idiots) so imbecile that they differ very little from the beasts of the field. Perhaps I am told, in answer to this, that the bodies are the cause of these imperfections. But surely the opinion which we wish to see vindicated from objection does not require us to affirm that the soul chose for itself the body which so impairs it, and, being deceived in the choice, committed a blunder; or that the soul, when it was compelled, as a necessary consequence of being born, to enter into some body, was hindered from finding another by crowds of souls occupying the other bodies before it came, so that, like a man who takes whatever seat may remain vacant for him in a theatre, the soul was guided in taking possession of the imperfect body not by its choice, but by its circumstances. We, of course, cannot say and ought not to believe such things. Tell us, therefore, what we ought to believe and to say in order to vindicate from this difficulty the theory that for each individual body a new soul is specially created.

CHAP. VII. 18. In my books on *Free Will*, already referred to, I have said something, not in regard to the variety of capacities in different souls, but, at least, in regard to the pains which infant children suffer in this life. The nature of the opinion which I there expressed, and the reason why it is insufficient for the purposes of our present inquiry, I will now submit to you, and will put into this letter a copy of the passage in the third book to which I refer. It is as follows:—"In connection with the bodily sufferings experienced by the little children who, by reason of their tender age, have no sins—if the souls which animate them did not exist before they were born into the human family—a more grievous and, as it were, compassionate complaint is very commonly made in the remark, 'What evil have they done that they should suffer these things?' as if there could be a meritorious innocence in any one before the time at which it is possible for him to do anything wrong! Moreover, if God accomplishes, in any

measure, the correction of the parents when they are chastised by the sufferings or by the death of the children that are dear to them, is there any reason why these things should not take place, seeing that, after they are past, they will be, to those who experienced them, as if they had never been, while the persons on whose account they were inflicted will either become better, being moved by the rod of temporal afflictions to choose a better mode of life, or be left without excuse under the punishment awarded at the coming judgment, if, notwithstanding the sorrows of this life, they have refused to turn their desires towards eternal life? Moreover, who knows what may be given to the little children by means of whose sufferings the parents have their obdurate hearts subdued, or their faith exercised, or their compassion proved? Who knows what good recompense God may, in the secret of His judgments, reserve for these little ones? For although they have done no righteous action, nevertheless, being free from any transgression of their own, they have suffered these trials. It is certainly not without reason that the Church exalts to the honourable rank of martyrs those children who were slain when Herod sought our Lord Jesus Christ to put Him to death."[1]

19. These things I wrote at that time when I was endeavouring to defend the opinion which is now under discussion. For, as I mentioned shortly before, I was labouring to prove that whichever of these four opinions regarding the soul's incarnation may be found true, the substance of the Creator is absolutely free from blame, and is completely removed from all share in our sins. And, therefore, whichever of these opinions might come to be established or demolished by the truth, this had no bearing on the object aimed at in the work which I was then attempting, seeing that whichever opinion might win the victory over all the rest, after they had been examined in a more thorough discussion, this would take place without causing me any disquietude, because my object then was to prove that, even admitting all these opinions, the doctrine maintained by me remained unshaken. But now my object is, by the force of sound reasoning, to select, if possible, one opinion out of the four; and, therefore, when I carefully

[1] *De Libero Arbitrio*, lib. iii. ch. 23, n. 67.

consider the words now quoted from that book, I do not see that the arguments there used in defending the opinion which we are now discussing are valid and conclusive.

20. For what may be called the chief prop of my defence is in the sentence, "Moreover, who knows what may be given to the little children, by means of whose sufferings the parents have their obdurate hearts subdued, or their faith exercised, or their compassion proved? Who knows what good recompense God may, in the secret of His judgments, reserve for these little ones?" I see that this is not an unwarranted conjecture in the case of infants who, in any way, suffer (though they know it not) for the sake of Christ and in the cause of true religion, and of infants who have already been made partakers of the sacrament of Christ; because, apart from union to the one Mediator, they cannot be delivered from condemnation, and so put in a position in which it is even possible that a recompense could be made to them for the evils which, in diverse afflictions, they have endured in this world. But since the question cannot be fully solved, unless the answer include also the case of those who, without having received the sacrament of Christian fellowship, die in infancy after enduring the most painful sufferings, what recompense can be conceived of in their case, seeing that, besides all that they suffer in this life, perdition awaits them in the life to come? As to the baptism of infants, I have, in the same book, given an answer, not, indeed, fully, but so far as seemed necessary for the work which then occupied me, proving that it profits children, even though they do not know what it is, and have, as yet, no faith of their own; but on the subject of the perdition of those infants who depart from this life without baptism, I did not think it necessary to say anything then, because the question under discussion was different from that with which we are now engaged.

21. If, however, we pass over and make no account of those sufferings which are of brief continuance, and which, when endured, are not to be repeated, we certainly cannot, in like manner, make no account of the fact that "by one man death came, and by one man came also the resurrection of the dead; for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made

alive."[1] For, according to this apostolical, divine, and perspicuous declaration, it is sufficiently plain that no one goes to death otherwise than through Adam, and that no one goes to life eternal otherwise than through Christ. For this is the force of *all* in the two parts of the sentence; as all men, by their first, that is, their natural birth, belong to Adam, even so all men, whoever they be, who come to Christ come to the second, that is, the spiritual birth. For this reason, therefore, the word *all* is used in both clauses, because as all who die do not die otherwise than in Adam, so all who shall be made alive shall not be made alive otherwise than in Christ. Wherefore whosoever tells us that any man can be made alive in the resurrection of the dead otherwise than in Christ, he is to be detested as a pestilent enemy to the common faith. Likewise, whosoever says that those children who depart out of this life without partaking of that sacrament shall be made alive in Christ, certainly contradicts the apostolic declaration, and condemns the universal Church, in which it is the practice to lose no time and run in haste to administer baptism to infant children, because it is believed, as an indubitable truth, that otherwise they cannot be made alive in Christ. Now he that is not made alive in Christ must necessarily remain under the condemnation, of which the apostle says, that "by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation."[2] That infants are born under the guilt of this offence is believed by the whole Church. It is also a doctrine which you have most faithfully set forth, both in your treatise against Jovinian and your exposition of Jonah, as I mentioned above, and, if I am not mistaken, in other parts of your works which I have not read or have at present forgotten. I therefore ask, what is the ground of this condemnation of unbaptized infants? For if new souls are made for men, individually, at their birth, I do not see, on the one hand, that they could have any sin while yet in infancy, nor do I believe, on the other hand, that God condemns any soul which He sees to have no sin.

CHAP. VIII. 22. Are we perchance to say, in answer to this, that in the infant the body alone is the cause of sin; but that for each body a new soul is made, and that if this

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. [2] Rom. v. 18.

soul live according to the precepts of God, by the help of the grace of Christ, the reward of being made incorruptible may be secured for the body itself, when subdued and kept under the yoke; and that inasmuch as the soul of an infant cannot yet do this, unless it receive the sacrament of Christ, that which could not yet be obtained for the body by the holiness of the soul is obtained for it by the grace of this sacrament; but if the soul of an infant depart without the sacrament, it shall itself dwell in life eternal, from which it could not be separated, as it had no sin, while, however, the body which it occupied shall not rise again in Christ, because the sacrament had not been received before its death?

23. This opinion I have never heard or read anywhere. I have, however, certainly heard and believed the statement which led me to speak thus, namely, "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life,"—the resurrection, namely, of which it is said that "by one man came the resurrection of the dead," and in which "all shall be made alive in Christ,"—"and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."[1] Now, what is to be understood regarding infants which, before they could do good or evil, have quitted the body without baptism? Nothing is said here concerning them. But if the bodies of these infants shall not rise again, because they have never done either good or evil, the bodies of the infants that have died after receiving the grace of baptism shall also have no resurrection, because they also were not in this life able to do good or evil. If, however, these are to rise among the saints, *i.e.* among those who have done good, among whom shall the others rise again but among those who have done evil—unless we are to believe that some human souls shall not receive, either in the resurrection of life, or in the resurrection of damnation, the bodies which they lost in death? This opinion, however, is condemned, even before it is formally refuted, by its absolute novelty; and besides this, who could bear to think that those who run with their infant children to have them baptized, are prompted to do so by a regard for

[1] John v. 29.

their bodies, not for their souls? The blessed Cyprian, indeed, said, in order to correct those who thought that an infant should not be baptized before the eighth day, that it was not the body but the soul which behoved to be saved from perdition—in which statement he was not inventing any new doctrine, but preserving the firmly established faith of the Church; and he, along with some of his colleagues in the episcopal office, held that a child may be properly baptized immediately after its birth.[1]

24. Let every man, however, believe anything which commends itself to his own judgment, even though it run counter to some opinion of Cyprian, who may not have seen in the matter what should have been seen. But let no man believe anything which runs counter to the perfectly unambiguous apostolical declaration, that by the offence of one all are brought into condemnation, and that from this condemnation nothing sets men free but the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom alone life is given to all who are made alive. And let no man believe anything which runs counter to the firmly grounded practice of the Church, in which, if the sole reason for hastening the administration of baptism were to save the children, the dead as well as the living would be brought to be baptized.

25. These things being so, it is necessary still to investigate and to make known the reason why, if souls are created new for every individual at his birth, those who die in infancy without the sacrament of Christ are doomed to perdition; for that they are doomed to this if they so depart from the body is testified both by Holy Scripture and by the holy Church. Wherefore, as to that opinion of yours concerning the creation of new souls, if it does not contradict this firmly grounded article of faith, let it be mine also; but if it does, let it be no longer yours.

26. Let it not be said to me that we ought to receive as supporting this opinion the words of Scripture in Zechariah, "He formeth the spirit of man within him,"[2] and in the book of Psalms, "He formeth their hearts severally."[3] We must seek for the strongest and most indisputable proof, that we may not be compelled to believe that God is a judge who condemns any soul which has no fault. For to create signifies either as

[1] Cyprian's Letters (LIX., *Ad Fidum*).
[2] Zech. xii. 1.
[3] Ps. xxxiii. 15 (LXX.).

much or, probably, more than to form [*fingere*]; nevertheless it is written, "Create in me a clean heart, O God,"[1] and yet it cannot be supposed that a soul here expresses a desire to be made before it has begun to exist. Therefore, as it is a soul already existing which is created by being renewed in righteousness, so it is a soul already existing which is formed by the moulding power of doctrine. Nor is your opinion, which I would willingly make my own, supported by that sentence in Ecclesiastes, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return to God who gave it."[2] Nay, it rather favours those who think that all souls are derived from one; for they say that, as the dust returns to the earth as it was, and yet the body of which this is said returns not to the man from whom it was derived, but to the earth from which the first man was made, the spirit in like manner, though derived from the spirit of the first man, does not return to him but to the Lord, by whom it was given to our first parent. Since, however, the testimony of this passage in their favour is not so decisive as to make it appear altogether opposed to the opinion which I shall gladly see vindicated, I thought proper to submit these remarks on it to your judgment, to prevent you from endeavouring to deliver me from my perplexities by quoting passages such as these. For although no man's wishes can make that true which is not true, nevertheless, were this possible, I would wish that this opinion should be true, as I do wish that, if it is true, it should be most clearly and unanswerably vindicated by you.

CHAP. IX. 27. The same difficulty attends those also who hold that souls already existing elsewhere, and prepared from the beginning of the works of God, are sent by Him into bodies. For to these persons also the same question may be put: If these souls, being without any fault, go obediently to the bodies to which they are sent, why are they subjected to punishment in the case of infants, if they come without being baptized to the end of this life? The same difficulty unquestionably attaches to both opinions. Those who affirm that each soul is, according to the deserts of its actions in an earlier state of being, united to the body allotted to it in this life, imagine

[1] Ps. li. 10. [2] Eccles. xii. 7.

that they escape more easily from this difficulty. For they think that to "die in Adam" means to suffer punishment in that flesh which is derived from Adam, from which condition of guilt the grace of Christ, they say, delivers the young as well as the old. So far, indeed, they teach what is right, and true, and excellent, when they say that the grace of Christ delivers the young as well as the old from the guilt of sins. But that souls sin in another earlier life, and that for their sins in that state of being they are cast down into bodies as prisons, I do not believe: I reject and protest against such an opinion. I do this, in the first place, because they affirm that this is accomplished by means of some incomprehensible revolutions, so that after I know not how many cycles the soul must return again to the same burden of corruptible flesh and to the endurance of punishment,—than which opinion I do not know that anything more horrible could be conceived. In the next place, who is the righteous man gone from the earth about whom we should not (if what they say is true) feel afraid lest, sinning in Abraham's bosom, he should be cast down into the flames which tormented the rich man in the parable?[1] For why may the soul not sin after leaving the body, if it can sin before entering it? Finally, to have sinned in Adam (in regard to which the apostle says that in him all have sinned) is one thing, but it is a wholly different thing to have sinned, I know not where, outside of Adam, and then because of this to be thrust into Adam—that is, into the body, which is derived from Adam, as into a prison-house. As to the other opinion mentioned above, that all souls are derived from one, I will not begin to discuss it unless I am under necessity to do so; and my desire is, that if the opinion which we are now discussing is true, it may be so vindicated by you that there shall be no longer any necessity for examining the other.

28. Although, however, I desire and ask, and with fervent prayers wish and hope, that by you the Lord may remove my ignorance on this subject, if, after all, I am found unworthy to obtain this, I will beg the grace of patience from the Lord our God, in whom we have such faith, that even if there be some things which He does not open to us when we knock,

[1] Luke xvi. 22, 23.

we know it would be wrong to murmur in the least against Him. I remember what He said to the apostles themselves: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."[1] Among these things, so far at least as I am concerned, let me still reckon this, and let me guard against being angry that I am deemed unworthy to possess this knowledge, lest by such anger I be all the more clearly proved to be unworthy. I am equally ignorant of many other things, yea, of more than I could name or even number; and of this I would be more patiently ignorant, were it not that I fear lest some one of these opinions, involving the contradiction of truth which we most assuredly believe, should insinuate itself into the minds of the unwary. Meanwhile, though I do not yet know which of these opinions is to be preferred, this one thing I profess as my deliberate conviction, that the opinion which is true does not conflict with that most firm and well grounded article in the faith of the Church of Christ, that infant children, even when they are newly born, can be delivered from perdition in no other way than through the grace of Christ's name, which He has given in His sacraments.

LETTER CLXVII.

(A.D. 415.)

FROM AUGUSTINE TO JEROME, ON JAMES II. 10.

CHAP. I. 1. My brother Jerome, esteemed worthy to be honoured in Christ by me, when I wrote to you propounding this question concerning the human soul,—if a new soul be now created for each individual at birth, whence do souls contract the bond of guilt which we assuredly believe to be removed by the sacrament of the grace of Christ, when administered even to new-born children?—as the letter on that subject grew to the size of a considerable volume, I was unwilling to impose the burden of any other question at that time; but there is a subject which has a much stronger claim on my attention, as it presses more seriously on my mind. I therefore ask you, and in God's name beseech you, to do something which will, I believe,

[1] John xvi. 12.

be of great service to many, namely, to explain to me (or to direct me to any work in which you or any other commentator has already expounded) the sense in which we are to understand these words in the Epistle of James, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."[1] This subject is of such importance that I very greatly regret that I did not write to you in regard to it long ago.

2. For whereas in the question which I thought it necessary to submit to you concerning the soul, our inquiries were engaged with the investigation of a life wholly past and sunk out of sight in oblivion, in this question we study this present life, and how it must be spent if we would attain to eternal life. As an apt illustration of this remark let me quote an entertaining anecdote. A man had fallen into a well where the quantity of water was sufficient to break his fall and save him from death, but not deep enough to cover his mouth and deprive him of speech. Another man approached, and on seeing him cries out in surprise: "How did you fall in here?" He answers: "I beseech you to plan how you can get me out of this, rather than ask how I fell in." So, since we admit and hold as an article of the Catholic faith, that the soul of even a little infant requires to be delivered out of the guilt of sin, as out of a pit, by the grace of Christ, it is sufficient for the soul of such a one that we know the way in which it is saved, even though we should never know the way in which it came into that wretched condition. But I thought it our duty to inquire into this subject, lest we should incautiously hold any one of those opinions concerning the manner of the soul's becoming united with the body which might contradict the doctrine that the souls of little children require to be delivered, by denying that they are subject to the bond of guilt. This, then, being very firmly held by us, that the soul of every infant needs to be freed from the guilt of sin, and can be freed in no other way except by the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, if we can ascertain the cause and origin of the evil itself, we are better prepared and equipped for resisting adversaries whose empty talk I call not reasoning but quibbling; if, however, we cannot ascertain the cause, the fact

[1] Jas. ii. 10.

that the origin of this misery is hid from us is no reason for our being slothful in the work which compassion demands from us. In our conflict, however, with those who appear to themselves to know what they do not know, we have an additional strength and safety in not being ignorant of our ignorance on this subject. For there are some things which it is evil not to know; there are other things which cannot be known, or are not necessary to be known, or have no bearing on the life which we seek to obtain; but the question which I now submit to you from the writings of the Apostle James is intimately connected with the course of conduct in which we live, and in which, with a view to life eternal, we endeavour to please God.

3. How, then, I beseech you, are we to understand the words: "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all"? Does this affirm that the person who shall have committed theft, nay, who even shall have said to the rich man, "Sit thou here," and to the poor man, "Stand thou there," is guilty of homicide, and adultery, and sacrilege? And if he is not so, how can it be said that a person who has offended in one point has become guilty of all? Or are the things which the apostle said concerning the rich man and the poor man not to be reckoned among those things in one of which if any man offend he becomes guilty of all? But we must remember whence that sentence is taken, and what goes before it, and in what connection it occurs. "My brethren," he says, "have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him? But ye have despised the poor,"[1]—inasmuch as you have said to the poor man, "Stand thou

[1] Jas. ii. 1–6.

there," when you would have said to a man with a gold ring, "Sit thou here in a good place." And then there follows a passage explaining and enlarging upon that same conclusion: "Do not rich men oppress you by their power, and draw you before the judgment-seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? If ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: but if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors."[1] See how the apostle calls those transgressors of the law who say to the rich man, "Sit here," and to the poor, "Stand there." See how, lest they should think it a trifling sin to transgress the law in this one thing, he goes on to add: "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou do not kill, yet, if thou commit adultery, thou art become a transgressor of the law," according to that which he had said: "Ye are convinced of the law as transgressors." Since these things are so, it seems to follow, unless it can be shown that we are to understand it in some other way, that he who says to the rich man, "Sit here," and to the poor, "Stand there," not treating the one with the same respect as the other, is to be judged guilty as an idolater, and a blasphemer, and an adulterer, and a murderer—in short,—not to enumerate all, which would be tedious,—as guilty of all crimes, since, "offending in one, he is guilty of all."

CHAP. II. 4. But has he who has one virtue all virtues? and has he no virtues who lacks one? If this be true, the sentence of the apostle is thereby confirmed. But what I desire is to have the sentence explained, not confirmed, since of itself it stands more sure in our esteem than all the authority of philosophers could make it. And even if what has just been said concerning virtues and vices were true, it would not follow that therefore all sins are equal. For as to the inseparable co-existence of the virtues, this is a doctrine in regard to which, if I remember rightly, what, indeed, I have almost forgotten (though perhaps I am mistaken), all

[1] Jas. ii. 6–9.

philosophers who affirm that virtues are essential to the right conduct of life are agreed. The doctrine of the equality of sins, however, the Stoics alone dared to maintain in opposition to the unanimous sentiments of mankind: an absurd tenet, which in writing against Jovinianus (a Stoic in this opinion, but an Epicurean in following after and defending pleasure) you have most clearly refuted from the Holy Scriptures.[1] In that most delightful and noble dissertation you have made it abundantly plain that it has not been the doctrine of our authors, or rather of the Truth Himself, who has spoken through them, that all sins are equal. I shall now do my utmost in endeavouring, with the help of God, to show how it can be that, although the doctrine of philosophers concerning virtues is true, we are nevertheless not compelled to admit the Stoics' doctrine that all sins are equal. If I succeed, I will look for your approbation, and in whatever respect I come short, I beg you to supply my deficiencies.

5. Those who maintain that he who has one virtue has all, and that he who lacks one lacks all, reason correctly from the fact that prudence cannot be cowardly, nor unjust, nor intemperate; for if it were any of these it would no longer be prudence. Moreover, if it be prudence only when it is brave, and just, and temperate, assuredly wherever it exists it must have the other virtues along with it. In like manner, also, courage cannot be imprudent, or intemperate, or unjust; temperance must of necessity be prudent, brave, and just; and justice does not exist unless it be prudent, brave, and temperate. Thus, wherever any one of these virtues truly exists, the others likewise exist; and where some are absent, that which may appear in some measure to resemble virtue is not really present.

6. There are, as you know, some vices opposed to virtues by a palpable contrast, as imprudence is the opposite of prudence. But there are some vices opposed to virtues simply because they are vices which, nevertheless, by a deceitful appearance resemble virtues; as, for example, in the relation, not of imprudence, but of craftiness to the said virtue

[1] Jerome, *Contra Jovinianum*, lib. ii.

of prudence. I speak here of that craftiness[1] which is wont to be understood and spoken of in connection with the evilly disposed, not in the sense in which the word is usually employed in our Scriptures, where it is often used in a good sense, as, "Be crafty as serpents,"[2] and again, "to give craftiness to the simple."[3] It is true that among heathen writers one of the most accomplished of Latin authors, speaking of Catiline, has said: "Nor was there lacking on his part craftiness to guard against danger,"[4] using "craftiness" (astutia) in a good sense; but the use of the word in this sense is among them very rare, among us very common. So also in regard to the virtues classed under temperance. Extravagance is most manifestly opposite to the virtue of frugality; but that which the common people are wont to call niggardliness is indeed a vice, yet one which, not in its nature, but by a very deceitful similarity of appearance, usurps the name of frugality. In the same manner injustice is by a palpable contrast opposed to justice; but the desire of avenging oneself is wont often to be a counterfeit of justice, but it is a vice. There is an obvious contrariety between courage and cowardice; but hardihood, though differing from courage in nature, deceives us by its resemblance to that virtue. Firmness is a part of virtue; fickleness is a vice far removed from and undoubtedly opposed to it; but obstinacy lays claim to the name of firmness, yet is wholly different, because firmness is a virtue, and obstinacy is a vice.

7. To avoid the necessity of again going over the same ground, let us take one case as an example, from which all others may be understood. Catiline, as those who have written concerning him had means of knowing, was capable of enduring cold, thirst, hunger, and patient in fastings, cold, and watchings beyond what any one could believe, and thus he appeared, both to himself and to his followers, a man endowed with great courage.[5] But this courage was not prudent, for he chose the evil instead of the good; was not temperate, for his life was disgraced by the lowest dissipation; was not just, for he conspired against his country; and

[1] Astutia. [2] Matt. x. 16. [3] Prov. i. 4.
[4] Sallust, *De Bello Catilinario*. [5] *Ibid.*

therefore it was not courage, but hardihood usurping the name of courage to deceive fools; for if it had been courage, it would not have been a vice but a virtue, and if it had been a virtue, it would never have been abandoned by the other virtues, its inseparable companions.

8. On this account, when it is asked also concerning vices, whether where one exists all in like manner exist, or where one does not exist none exist, it would be a difficult matter to show this, because two vices are wont to be opposed to one virtue, one that is evidently opposed, and another that bears an apparent likeness. Hence the hardihood of Catiline is the more easily seen not to have been courage, since it had not along with it other virtues; but it may be difficult to convince men that his hardihood was cowardice, since he was in the habit of enduring and patiently submitting to the severest hardships to a degree almost incredible. But perhaps, on examining the matter more closely, this hardihood itself is seen to be cowardice, because he shrunk from the toil of those liberal studies by which true courage is acquired. Nevertheless, as there are rash men who are not guilty of cowardice, and there are cowardly men who are not guilty of rashness, and since in both there is vice, for the truly brave man neither ventures rashly nor fears without reason, we are forced to admit that vices are more numerous than virtues.

9. Accordingly, it happens sometimes that one vice is supplanted by another, as the love of money by the love of praise. Occasionally, one vice quits the field that more may take its place, as in the case of the drunkard, who, after becoming temperate in the use of drink, may come under the power of niggardliness and ambition. It is possible, therefore, that vices may give place to vices, not to virtues, as their successors, and thus they are more numerous. When one virtue, however, has entered, there will infallibly be (since it brings all the other virtues along with it) a retreat of all vices whatsoever that were in the man; for all vices were not in him, but at one time so many, at another a greater or smaller number might occupy their place.

CHAP. III. 10. We must inquire more carefully whether

these things are so; for the statement that "he who has one virtue has all, and that all virtues are awanting to him who lacks one," is not given by inspiration, but is the view held by many men, ingenious, indeed, and studious, but still men. But I must avow that, in the case—I shall not say of one of those from whose name the word virtue is said to be derived,[1] but even of a woman who is faithful to her husband, and who is so from a regard to the commandments and promises of God, and, first of all, is faithful to Him, I do not know how I could say of her that she is unchaste, or that chastity is no virtue, or a trifling one. I should feel the same in regard to a husband who is faithful to his wife; and yet there are many such, none of whom I could affirm to be without any sins, and doubtless the sin which is in them, whatever it be, proceeds from some vice. Whence it follows that though conjugal fidelity in religious men and women is undoubtedly a virtue, for it is neither a nonentity nor a vice, yet it does not bring along with it all virtues, for if all virtues were there, there would be no vice, and if there were no vice there would be no sin; but where is the man who is altogether without sin? Where, therefore, is the man who is without any vice, that is, fuel or root, as it were, of sin, when he who reclined on the breast of the Lord says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us"?[2] It is not necessary for us to urge this at greater length in writing to you, but I make the statement for the sake of others who perhaps shall read this. For you, indeed, in that same splendid work against Jovinianus, have carefully proved this from the Holy Scriptures; in which work also you have quoted the words, "in many things we all offend,"[3] from this very epistle in which occur the words whose meaning we are now investigating. For though it is an apostle of Christ who is speaking, he does not say, "ye offend," but, "we offend;" and although in the passage under consideration he says, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all,"[4] in the words just quoted he affirms that we offend not

[1] Virum a quo denominata dicitur virtus.
[2] 1 John i. 8.
[3] Jas. iii. 2.
[4] Jas. ii. 10.

in one thing but in *many*, and not that some offend but that we *all* offend.

11. Far be it, however, from any believer to think that so many thousands of the servants of Christ, who, lest they should deceive themselves, and the truth should not be in them, sincerely confess themselves to have sin, are altogether without virtue! For wisdom is a great virtue, and wisdom herself has said to man, "Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom."[1] Far be it from us, then, to say that so many and so great believing and pious men have not the fear of the Lord, which the Greeks call *εὐσέβεια*, or more literally and fully, *θεοσέβεια*. And what is the fear of the Lord but His worship? and whence is He truly worshipped except from love? Love, then, out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned, is the great and true virtue, because it is "the end of the commandment."[2] Deservedly is love said to be "strong as death,"[3] because, like death, it is vanquished by none; or because the measure of love in this life is even unto death, as the Lord says, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;"[4] or, rather, because, as death forcibly separates the soul from the senses of the body, so love separates it from fleshly lusts. Knowledge, when it is of the right kind, is the handmaid to love, for without love "knowledge puffeth up,"[5] but where love, by edifying, has filled the heart, there knowledge will find nothing empty which it can puff up. Moreover, Job has shown what is that useful knowledge by defining it where, after saying, "The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom," he adds, "and to depart from evil, that is understanding."[6] Why do we not then say that the man who has this virtue has all virtues, since "love is the fulfilling of the law?"[7] Is it not true that, the more love exists in a man the more he is endowed with virtue, and the less love he has the less virtue is in him, for love is itself virtue; and the less virtue there is in a man so much the more vice will there be in him? Therefore, where love is full and perfect, no vice will remain.

[1] Job xxviii. 28, Sept. ver. [2] 1 Tim. i. 5. [3] Song of Sol. viii. 6.
[4] John xv. 13. [5] 1 Cor. viii. 1. [6] Job xxviii. 28.
[7] Rom. xiii. 10.

12. The Stoics, therefore, appear to me to be mistaken in refusing to admit that a man who is advancing in wisdom has any wisdom at all, and in affirming that he only has it who has become altogether perfect in wisdom. They do not, indeed, deny that he has made progress, but they say that he is in no degree entitled to be called wise, unless, by emerging, so to speak, from the depths, he suddenly springs forth into the free air of wisdom. For, as it matters not when a man is drowning whether the depth of water above him be many stadia or only the breadth of a hand or finger, so they say in regard to the progress of those who are advancing towards wisdom, that they are like men rising from the bottom of a whirlpool towards the air, but that unless they, by their progress, so escape as to emerge wholly from folly as from an overwhelming flood, they have not virtue and are not wise; but that, when they have so escaped, they immediately have wisdom in perfection, and not a vestige of folly whence any sin could be originated remains.

13. This simile, in which folly is compared to water and wisdom to air, so that the mind emerging, as it were, from the stifling influence of folly breathes suddenly the free air of wisdom, does not appear to me to harmonize sufficiently with the authoritative statement of our Scriptures; a better simile, so far, at least, as illustration of spiritual things can be borrowed from material things, is that which compares vice or folly to darkness, and virtue or wisdom to light. The way to wisdom is therefore not like that of a man rising from the water into the air, in which, in the moment of rising above the surface of the water, he suddenly breathes freely, but, like that of a man proceeding from darkness into light, on whom more light gradually shines as he advances. So long, therefore, as this is not fully accomplished, we speak of the man as of one going from the dark recesses of a vast cavern towards its entrance, who is more and more influenced by the proximity of the light as he comes nearer to the entrance of the cavern; so that whatever light he has proceeds from the light to which he is advancing, and whatever darkness still remains in him proceeds from the darkness out of which he is emerging. Therefore it is true that in the sight of God "shall no man

living be justified,"[1] and yet that "the just shall live by his faith."[2] On the one hand, "the saints are clothed with righteousness,"[3] one more, another less; on the other hand, no one lives here wholly without sin—one sins more, another less, and the best is the man who sins least.

CHAP. IV. 14. But why have I, as if forgetting to whom I address myself, assumed the tone of a teacher in stating the question regarding which I wish to be instructed by you? Nevertheless, as I had resolved to submit to your examination my opinion regarding the equality of sins (a subject involving a question closely bearing on the matter on which I was writing), let me now at last bring my statement to a conclusion. Even though it were true that he who has one virtue has all virtues, and that he who lacks one virtue has none, this would not involve the consequence that all sins are equal; for although it is true that where there is no virtue there is nothing right, it by no means follows that among bad actions one cannot be worse than another, or that divergence from that which is right does not admit of degrees. I think, however, that it is more agreeable to truth and consistent with the Holy Scriptures to say, that what is true of the members of the body is true of the different dispositions of the soul (which, though not seen occupying different places, are by their distinctive workings perceived as plainly as the members of the body), namely, that as in the same body one member is more fully shone upon by the light, another is less shone upon, and a third is altogether without light and remains in the dark under some impervious covering, something similar takes place in regard to the various dispositions of the soul. If this be so, then according to the manner in which every man is shone upon by the light of holy love, he may be said to have one virtue and to lack another virtue, or to have one virtue in larger and another in smaller measure. For in reference to that love which is the fear of God, we may correctly say both that it is greater in one man than in another, and that there is some of it in one man and none of it in another; we may also correctly say as to an individual that he has greater chastity than patience, and that he has either virtue in a higher degree than he had yesterday, if he is making progress,

[1] Ps. cxliii. 2. [2] Hab. ii. 4. [3] Job xxix. 14.

or that he still lacks self-control, but possesses, at the same time, a large measure of compassion.

15. To sum up generally and briefly the view which, so far as relates to holy living, I entertain concerning virtue,—virtue is the love with which that which ought to be loved is loved. This is in some greater, in others less, and there are men in whom it does not exist at all; but in the absolute fulness which admits of no increase, it exists in no man while living on this earth; so long, however, as it admits of being increased there can be no doubt that, in so far as it is less than it ought to be, the shortcoming proceeds from vice. Because of this vice there is "not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not;"[1] because of this vice, "in God's sight shall no man living be justified."[2] On account of this vice, "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."[3] On account of this also, whatever progress we may have made, we must say, "Forgive us our debts,"[4] although all debts in word, deed, and thought were washed away in baptism. He, then, who sees aright, sees whence, and when, and where he must hope for that perfection to which nothing can be added. Moreover, if there had been no commandments, there would have been no means whereby a man might certainly examine himself and see from what things he ought to turn aside, whither he should aspire, and in what things he should find occasion for thanksgiving or for prayer. Great, therefore, is the benefit of commandments, if to free will so much liberty be granted that the grace of God may be more abundantly honoured.

CHAP. V. 16. If these things be so, how shall a man who shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, be guilty of all? May it not be, that since the fulfilling of the law is that love wherewith we love God and our neighbour, on which commandments of love "hang all the law and the prophets,"[5] he is justly held to be guilty of all who violates that on which all hang? Now, no one sins without violating this love; "for this, thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt do no murder; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not covet;

[1] Eccles. v. 7. [2] Ps. cxliii. 2. [3] 1 John i. 8.
[4] Matt. vi. 12. [5] Matt. xxii. 40.

and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."[1] No one, however, loves his neighbour who does not out of his love to God do all in his power to bring his neighbour also, whom he loves as himself, to love God, whom if he does not love, he neither loves himself nor his neighbour. Hence it is true that if a man shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he becomes guilty of all, because he does what is contrary to that love on which hangs the whole law. A man, therefore, becomes guilty of all by doing what is contrary to that on which all hang.

17. Why, then, may not all sins be said to be equal? May not the reason be, that the transgression of the law of love is greater in him who commits a more grievous sin, and is less in him who commits a less grievous sin? And in the mere fact of his committing any sin whatever, he becomes guilty of all; but in committing a more grievous sin, or in sinning in more respects than one, he becomes more guilty; committing a less grievous sin, or sinning in fewer respects, he becomes less guilty,—his guilt being thus so much the greater the more he has sinned, the less the less he has sinned. Nevertheless, even though it be only in one point that he offend, he is guilty of all, because he violates that love on which all hang. If these things be true, an explanation is by this means found, clearing up that saying of the man of apostolic grace, "In many things we offend all."[2] For we all offend, but one more grievously, another more slightly, according as each may have committed a more grievous or a less grievous sin; every one being great in the practice of sin in proportion as he is deficient in loving God and his neighbour, and, on the other hand, decreasing in the practice of sin in proportion as he increases in the love of God and of his neighbour. The more, therefore, that a man is deficient in love, the more is he full of sin. And perfection in love is reached when nothing of sinful infirmity remains in us.

[1] Rom. xiii. 9, 10. [2] Jas. iii. 2.

18. Nor, indeed, in my opinion, are we to esteem it a trifling sin "to have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons," if we take the difference between sitting and standing, of which mention is made in the context, to refer to ecclesiastical honours; for who can bear to see a rich man chosen to a place of honour in the Church, while a poor man, of superior qualifications and of greater holiness, is despised? If, however, the apostle speaks there of our daily assemblies, who does not offend in the matter? At the same time, only those really offend here who cherish in their hearts the opinion that a man's worth is to be estimated according to his wealth; for this seems to be the meaning of the expression, "Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?"

19. The law of liberty, therefore, the law of love, is that of which he says: "If ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: but if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors."[1] And then (after the difficult sentence, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all," concerning which I have with sufficient fulness stated my opinion), making mention of the same law of liberty, he says: "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." And as he knew by experience what he had said a little before, "in many things we offend all," he suggests a sovereign remedy, to be applied, as it were day by day, to those less serious but real wounds which the soul suffers day by day, for he says: "He shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy."[2] For with the same purpose the Lord says: "Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: give, and it shall be given unto you."[3] After which the apostle says: "But mercy rejoiceth over judgment:" it is not said that mercy prevails over judgment, for it is not an adversary of judgment, but it "rejoiceth" over judgment, because a greater number are gathered in by mercy; but they are those who have shown mercy, for, "Blessed are the merciful, for God shall have mercy on them."[4]

[1] Jas. ii. 8, 9. [2] Jas. ii. 13. [3] Luke vi. 37, 38. [4] Matt. v. 7.

20. It is, therefore, by all means just that they be forgiven, because they have forgiven others, and that what they need be given to them, because they have given to others. For God uses mercy when He judgeth, and uses judgment when He showeth mercy. Hence the Psalmist says: "I will sing of mercy and of judgment unto Thee, O Lord."[1] For if any man, thinking himself too righteous to require mercy, presumes, as if he had no reason for anxiety, to wait for judgment without mercy, he provokes that most righteous indignation through fear of which the Psalmist said: "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant."[2] For this reason the Lord says to a disobedient people: "Wherefore will ye contend with me in judgment?"[3] For when the righteous King shall sit upon His throne, who shall boast that he has a pure heart, or who shall boast that he is clean from sin? What hope is there then unless mercy shall "rejoice over" judgment? But this it will do only in the case of those who have showed mercy, saying with sincerity, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," and who have given without murmuring, for "the Lord loveth a cheerful giver."[4] To conclude, St. James is led to speak thus concerning works of mercy in this passage, in order that he may console those whom the statements immediately foregoing might have greatly alarmed, his purpose being to admonish us how those daily sins from which our life is never free here below may also be expiated by daily remedies; lest any man, becoming guilty of all when he offends in even one point, be brought, by offending in many points (since "in many things we all offend"), to appear before the bar of the Supreme Judge under the enormous amount of guilt which has accumulated by degrees, and find at that tribunal no mercy, because he showed no mercy to others, instead of rather meriting the forgiveness of his own sins, and the enjoyment of the gifts promised in Scripture, by his extending forgiveness and bounty to others.

21. I have written at great length, which may perhaps have been tedious to you, as you, although approving of the statements now made, do not expect to be addressed as if you were but learning truths which you have been accustomed to

[1] Ps. ci. 1. [2] Ps. cxliii. 2. [3] Jer. ii. 28, LXX. [4] 2 Cor. ix. 7.

teach to others. If, however, there be anything in these statements—not in the style of language in which they are expounded, for I am not much concerned as to mere phrases, but in the substance of the statements—which your erudite judgment condemns, I beseech you to point this out to me in your reply, and do not hesitate to correct my error. For I pity the man who, in view of the unwearied labour and sacred character of your studies, does not on account of them both render to you the honour which you deserve, and give thanks unto our Lord God by whose grace you are what you are. Wherefore, since I ought to be more willing to learn from any teacher the things of which to my disadvantage I am ignorant, than prompt to teach any others what I know, with how much greater reason do I claim the payment of this debt of love from you, by whose learning ecclesiastical literature in the Latin tongue has been, in the Lord's name, and by His help, advanced to an extent which had been previously unattainable. Especially, however, I ask attention to the sentence: "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and offend in one point, is guilty of all." If you know any better way, my beloved brother, in which it can be explained, I beseech you by the Lord to favour us by communicating to us your exposition.

LETTER CLXIX.

(A.D. 415.)

BISHOP AUGUSTINE TO BISHOP EVODIUS.

CHAP. I. 1. If acquaintance with the treatises which specially occupy me, and from which I am unwilling to be turned aside to anything else, is so highly valued by your Holiness, let some one be sent to copy them for you. For I have now finished several of those which had been commenced by me this year before Easter, near the beginning of Lent. For, to the three books on the *City of God*, in opposition to its enemies, the worshippers of demons, I have added two others, and in these five books I think enough has been said to answer those who maintain that the [heathen] gods must be worshipped in order to secure prosperity in this present life, and who are

hostile to the Christian name from an idea that that prosperity is hindered by us. In the sequel I must, as I promised in the first book,[1] answer those who think that the worship of their gods is the only way to obtain that life after death with a view to obtain which we are Christians. I have dictated also, in volumes of considerable size, expositions of three Psalms, the 68th, the 72d, and the 78th. Commentaries on the other Psalms—not yet dictated, nor even entered on—are eagerly expected and demanded from me. From these studies I am unwilling to be called away and hindered by any questions thrusting themselves upon me from another quarter; yea, so unwilling, that I do not wish to turn at present even to the books on the Trinity, which I have long had on hand and have not yet completed, because they require a great amount of labour, and I believe that they are of a nature to be understood only by few; on which account they claim my attention less urgently than writings which may, I hope, be useful to very many.

2. For the words, "He that is ignorant shall be ignored,"[2] were not used by the apostle in reference to this subject, as your letter affirms; as if this punishment were to be inflicted on the man who is not able to discern by the exercise of his intellect the ineffable unity of the Trinity, in the same way as the unity of memory, understanding, and will in the soul of man is discerned. The apostle said these words with a wholly different design. Consult the passage and you will see that he was speaking of those things which might be for the edification of the many in faith and holiness, not of those which might with difficulty be comprehended by the few, and by them only in the small degree in which the comprehension of so great a subject is attainable in this life. The positions laid down by him were,—that prophesying was to be preferred to speaking with tongues; that these gifts should not be exercised in a disorderly manner, as if the spirit of prophecy compelled them to speak even against their will; that women should keep silence in the Church; and that all things should be done decently and in order. While treating of these things

[1] *De Civitate Dei*, lib. I. ch. xxxvi., vol. i. p. 47.
[2] 1 Cor. xiv. 38.

he says: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him know the things which I write to you, for they are the commands of the Lord. If any man be ignorant, he shall be ignored;" intending by these words to restrain and call to order persons who were specially ready to cause disorder in the Church, because they imagined themselves to excel in spiritual gifts, although they were disturbing everything by their presumptuous conduct. "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him know," he says, "the things which I write to you, for they are the commands of the Lord." If any man thinks himself to be, and in reality is not, a prophet, for he who is a prophet undoubtedly knows and does not need admonition and exhortation, because "he judgeth all things, and is himself judged of no man."[1] Those persons, therefore, caused confusion and trouble in the Church who thought themselves to be in the Church what they were not. He teaches these to know the commandments of the Lord, for He is not a "God of confusion, but of peace."[2] But "if any one is ignorant, he shall be ignored," that is to say, he shall be rejected; for God is not ignorant—so far as mere knowledge is concerned—in regard to the persons to whom He shall one day say, "I know you not,"[3] but their rejection is signified by this expression.

3. Moreover, since the Lord says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,"[4] and that sight is promised to us as the highest reward at the last, we have no reason to fear lest, if we are now unable to see clearly those things which we believe concerning the nature of God, this defective apprehension should bring us under the sentence, "He that is ignorant shall be ignored." For when "in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save those who believed." This foolishness of preaching and "foolishness of God which is wiser than man"[5] draws many to salvation, in such a way that not only those who are as yet incapable of perceiving with clear intelligence the nature of God which in faith they hold, but even those who have not yet so learned the nature of their own soul

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 15. [2] 1 Cor. xiv. 33. [3] Luke xiii. 27.
[4] Matt. v. 8. [5] 1 Cor. i. 21, 25.

as to distinguish between its incorporeal essence and the body as a whole with the same certainty with which they perceive that they live, understand, and will, are not on this account shut out from that salvation which that foolishness of preaching bestows on believers.

4. For if Christ died for those only who with clear intelligence can discern these things, our labour in the Church is almost spent in vain. But if, as is the fact, crowds of common people, possessing no great strength of intellect, run to the Physician in the exercise of faith, with the result of being healed by Christ and Him crucified, that "where sin has abounded, grace may much more abound,"[1] it comes in wondrous ways to pass, through the depths of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God and His unsearchable judgments, that, on the one hand, some who do discern between the material and the spiritual in their own nature, while pluming themselves on this attainment, and despising that foolishness of preaching by which those who believe are saved, wander far from the only path which leads to eternal life; and, on the other hand, because not one perishes for whom Christ died,[2] many glorying in the cross of Christ, and not withdrawing from that same path, attain, notwithstanding their ignorance of those things which some with most profound subtlety investigate, unto that eternity, truth, and love,—that is, unto that enduring, clear, and full felicity,—in which to those who abide, and see, and love, all things are plain.

CHAP. II. 5. Therefore let us with stedfast piety believe in one God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit; let us at the same time believe that the Son is not [the person] who is the Father, and the Father is not [the person] who is the Son, and neither the Father nor the Son is [the person] who is the Spirit of both the Father and the Son. Let it not be supposed that in this Trinity there is any separation in respect of time or place, but that these Three are equal and co-eternal, and absolutely of one nature; and that the creatures have been made, not some by the Father, and some by the Son, and some by the Holy Spirit, but that each and all that have been or are now being created subsist in the Trinity as

[1] Rom. v. 20. [2] John xvii. 12.

their Creator; and that no one is saved by the Father without the Son and the Holy Spirit, or by the Son without the Father and the Holy Spirit, or by the Holy Spirit without the Father and the Son,—but by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the only one, true, and truly immortal (that is, absolutely unchangeable) God. At the same time, we believe that many things are stated in Scripture separately concerning each of the Three, in order to teach us that, though they are an inseparable Trinity, yet they are a Trinity. For, just as when their names are pronounced in human language they cannot be named simultaneously, although their existence in inseparable union is at every moment simultaneous, even so in some places of Scripture also, they are by certain created things presented to us distinctively and in mutual relation to each other: for example, [at the baptism of Christ] the Father is heard in the voice which said, "Thou art my Son;" the Son is seen in the human nature which, in being born of the Virgin, He assumed; the Holy Spirit is seen in the bodily form of a dove,[1]—these things presenting the Three to our apprehension separately, indeed, but in no wise separated.

6. To present this in a form which the intellect may apprehend, we borrow an illustration from the Memory, the Understanding, and the Will. For although we can speak of each of these faculties severally in its own order, and at a separate time, we neither exercise nor even mention any one of them without the other two. It must not, however, be supposed, from our using this comparison between these three faculties and the Trinity, that the things compared agree in every particular, for where, in any process of reasoning, can we find an illustration in which the correspondence between the things compared is so exact that it admits of application in every point to that which it is intended to illustrate? In the first place, therefore, the similarity is found to be imperfect in this respect, that whereas memory, understanding, and will are not the soul, but only exist in the soul, the Trinity does not exist in God, but is God. In the Trinity, therefore, there is manifested a singleness [*simplicitas*] commanding our astonishment, be-

[1] Luke iii. 22.

cause in this Trinity it is not one thing to exist, and another thing to understand, or do anything else which is attributed to the nature of God; but in the soul it is one thing that it exists, and another thing that it understands, for even when it is not using the understanding it still exists. In the second place, who would dare to say that the Father does not understand by Himself but by the Son, as memory does not understand by itself but by the understanding, or, to speak more correctly, the soul in which these faculties are understands by no other faculty than by the understanding, as it remembers only by memory, and exercises volition only by the will? The point, therefore, to which the illustration is intended to apply is this,—that, whatever be the manner in which we understand, in regard to these three faculties in the soul, that when the several names by which they are severally represented are uttered, the utterance of each separate name is nevertheless accomplished only in the combined operation of all the three, since it is by an act of memory and of understanding and of will that it is spoken,—it is in the same manner that we understand, in regard to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, that no created thing which may at any time be employed to present only one of the Three to our minds is produced otherwise than by the simultaneous, because essentially inseparable, operation of the Trinity; and that, consequently, neither the voice of the Father, nor the body and soul of the Son, nor the dove of the Holy Spirit, was produced in any other way than by the combined operation of the Trinity.

7. Moreover, that sound of a voice was certainly not made indissolubly one with the person of the Father, for so soon as it was uttered it ceased to be. Neither was that form of a dove made indissolubly one with the person of the Holy Spirit, for it also, like the bright cloud which covered the Saviour and His three disciples on the mount,[1] or rather like the tongues of flame which once represented the same Holy Spirit, ceased to exist as soon as it had served its purpose as a symbol. But it was otherwise with the body and soul in which the Son of God was manifested: seeing that the deliverance of

[1] Matt. xvii. 5.

men was the object for which all these things were done, the human nature in which He appeared was, in a way marvellous and unique, assumed into real union with the person of the Word of God, that is, of the only Son of God,—the Word remaining unchangeably in His own nature, wherein it is not conceivable that there should be composite elements in union with which any mere semblance of a human soul could subsist. We read, indeed, that "the Spirit of wisdom is manifold;"[1] but it is also properly termed simple. Manifold it is, indeed, because there are many things which it possesses; but simple, because it is not a different thing from what it possesses, as the Son is said to have life in Himself, and yet He is Himself that life. The human nature came to the Word; the Word did not come, with susceptibility of change, into the human nature;[2] and therefore, in His union to the human nature which He has assumed, He is still properly called the Son of God; for which reason the same person is the Son of God immutable and co-eternal with the Father, and the Son of God who was laid in the grave,—the former being true of Him only as the Word, the latter true of Him only as a man.

8. Wherefore it behoves us, in reading any statements made concerning the Son of God, to observe in reference to which of these two natures they are spoken. For by His assumption of the soul and body of a man, no increase was made in the number of Persons: the Trinity remained as before. For just as in every man, with the exception of that one whom alone He assumed into personal union, the soul and body constitute one person, so in Christ the Word and His human soul and body constitute one person. And as the name philosopher, for example, is given to a man certainly with reference only to his soul, and yet it is nothing absurd, but only a most suitable and ordinary use of language, for us to say the philosopher was killed, the philosopher died, the philosopher was buried, although all these events befell him in his body, not in that part of him in which he was a philosopher; in like manner the name God, or Son of God, or Lord of Glory, or any other such name, is given to Christ as

[1] Wisd. vii. 22.

[2] Homo autem Verbo accessit, non Verbum in hominem convertibiliter accessit.

the Word, and it is, nevertheless, correct to say that God was crucified, seeing that there is no question that He suffered this death in His human nature, not in that in which He is the Lord of Glory.[1]

9. As for the sound of the voice, however, and the bodily form of a dove, and the cloven tongues which sat upon each of them, these, like the terrible wonders wrought at Sinai,[2] and like the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night,[3] were produced only as symbols, and vanished when this purpose had been served. The thing which we must especially guard against in connection with them is, lest any one should believe that the nature of God—whether of the Father, or of the Son, or of the Holy Spirit—is susceptible of change or transformation. And we must not be disturbed by the fact that the sign sometimes receives the name of the thing signified, as when the Holy Spirit is said to have descended in a bodily form as a dove and abode upon Him; for in like manner the smitten rock is called Christ,[4] because it was a symbol of Christ.

CHAP. III. 10. I wonder, however, that, although you believe it possible for the sound of the voice which said, "Thou art my Son," to have been produced through a divine act, without the intermediate agency of a soul, by something the nature of which was corporeal, you nevertheless do not believe that a bodily form and movements exactly resembling those of any real living creature whatsoever could be produced in the same way, namely, through a divine act, without the intermediate agency of a spirit imparting life. For if inanimate matter obeys God without the instrumentality of an animating spirit, so as to emit sounds such as are wont to be emitted by animated bodies, in order to bring to the human ear words articulately spoken, why should it not obey Him, so as to present to the human eye the figure and motions of a bird, by the same power of the Creator without the instrumentality of any animating spirit? The objects of both sight and hearing—the sound which strikes the ear and the appearance which meets the eye, the articulations of the voice and the outlines of the members, every audible and visible motion—are both

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 8. [2] Ex. xix. 18. [3] Ex. xiii. 21. [4] 1 Cor. x. 4.

alike produced from matter contiguous to us; is it, then, granted to the sense of hearing, and not to the sense of sight, to tell us regarding the body which is perceived by this bodily sense, both that it is a true body, and that it is nothing beyond what the bodily sense perceives it to be? For in every living creature the soul is, of course, not perceived by any bodily sense. We do not, therefore, need to inquire how the bodily form of the dove appeared to the eye, just as we do not need to inquire how the voice of a bodily form capable of speech was made to fall upon the ear. For if it was possible to dispense with the intermediate agency of a soul in the case in which a voice, not something like a voice, is said to have been produced, how much more easily was it possible in the case in which it is said that the Spirit descended "*like* a dove," a phrase which signifies that a mere bodily form was exhibited to the eye, and does not affirm that a real living creature was seen! In like manner, it is said that on the day of Pentecost, "suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a mighty rushing wind, and there appeared to them cloven tongues like as of fire," [1] in which something like wind and like fire, *i.e.* resembling these common and familiar natural phenomena, is said to have been perceived, but it does not seem to be indicated that these common and familiar natural phenomena were actually produced.

11. If, however, more subtle reasoning or more thorough investigation of the matter result in demonstrating that that which is naturally destitute of motion both in time and in space [*i.e.* matter] cannot be moved otherwise than through the intermediate agency of that which is capable of motion only in time, not in space [*i.e.* spirit], it will follow from this that all those things must have been done by the instrumentality of a living creature, as things are done by angels, on which subject a more elaborate discussion would be tedious, and is not necessary. To this it must be added, that there are visions which appear to the spirit as plainly as to the senses of the body, not only in sleep or delirium, but also to persons of sound mind in their waking hours,—visions which are due not to the deceitfulness of devils mocking men, but to some

[1] Acts ii. 2, 3.

spiritual revelation accomplished by means of immaterial forms resembling bodies, and which cannot by any means be distinguished from real objects, unless they are by divine assistance more fully revealed and discriminated by the mind's intelligence, which is done sometimes (but with difficulty) at the time, but for the most part after they have disappeared. This being the case in regard to these visions which, whether their nature be really material, or material only in appearance but really spiritual, seem to manifest themselves to our spirit as if they were perceived by the bodily senses, we ought not, when these things are recorded in sacred Scripture, to conclude hastily to which of these two classes they are to be referred, or whether, if they belong to the former, they are produced by the intermediate agency of a spirit; while, at the same time, as to the invisible and immutable nature of the Creator, that is, of the supreme and ineffable Trinity, we either simply, without any doubt, believe, or, in addition to this, with some degree of intellectual apprehension, understand that it is wholly removed and separated both from the senses of fleshly mortals, and from all susceptibility of being changed either for the worse or for the better, or to anything whatever of a variable nature.

CHAP. IV. 12. These things I send you in reference to two of your questions,—the one concerning the Trinity, and the other concerning the dove in which the Holy Spirit, not in His own nature, but in a symbolical form, was manifested, as also the Son of God, not in His eternal Sonship (of which the Father said: "Before the morning star I have begotten Thee"[1]), but in that human nature which He assumed from the Virgin's womb, was crucified by the Jews: observe that to you who are at leisure I have been able, notwithstanding immense pressure of business, to write so much. I have not, however, deemed it necessary to discuss everything which you have brought forward in your letter; but on these two questions which you wished me to solve, I think I have written as much as is exacted by Christian charity, though I may not have satisfied your vehement desire.

13. Besides the two books added to the first three in the

[1] Ps. cx. 3, LXX.

City of God, and the exposition of three psalms, as above mentioned,[1] I have also written a treatise to the holy presbyter Jerome concerning the origin of the soul,[2] asking him, in regard to the opinion which, in writing to Marcellinus of pious memory, he avowed as his own, that a new soul is made for each individual at birth, how this can be maintained without overthrowing that most surely established article of the Church's faith, according to which we firmly believe that all die in Adam,[3] and are brought down under condemnation unless they be delivered by the grace of Christ, which, by means of His sacrament, works even in infants. I have, moreover, written to the same person to inquire his opinion as to the sense in which the words of James, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all," are to be understood.[4] In this letter I have also stated my own opinion: in the other, concerning the origin of the soul, I have only asked what was his opinion, submitting the matter to his judgment, and at the same time discussing it to some extent. I wrote these to Jerome because I did not wish to lose an opportunity of correspondence afforded by a certain very pious and studious young presbyter, Orosius, who, prompted only by burning zeal in regard to the Holy Scriptures, came to us from the remotest part of Spain, namely, from the shore of the ocean, and whom I persuaded to go on from us to Jerome. In answer to certain questions of the same Orosius, as to things which troubled him in reference to the heresy of the Priscillianists, and some opinions of Origen which the Church has not accepted, I have written a treatise of moderate size with as much brevity and clearness as was in my power. I have also written a considerable book against the heresy of Pelagius,[5] being constrained to do this by some brethren whom he had persuaded to adopt his fatal error, denying the grace of Christ. If you wish to have all these, send some one to copy them all for you. Allow me, however, to be free from distraction in studying and dictating to my clerks those things which, being urgently required by

[1] Par. 1, p. 334. [2] Letter CLXVI. [3] 1 Cor. xv. 22. [4] Letter CLXVII.
[5] The work on *Nature and Grace*, addressed to Timasius and Jacobus—translated in the fourth volume of this series, *Antipelagian Writings*, i. 233.

many, claim in my opinion precedence over your questions, which are of interest to very few.

LETTER CLXXII.

(A.D. 416.)

TO AUGUSTINE, MY TRULY PIOUS LORD AND FATHER, WORTHY OF MY UTMOST AFFECTION AND VENERATION, JEROME SENDS GREETING IN CHRIST.

1. THAT honourable man, my brother, and your Excellency's son, the presbyter Orosius, I have, both on his own account and in obedience to your request, made welcome. But a most trying time has come upon us,[1] in which I have found it better for me to hold my peace than to speak, so that our studies have ceased, lest what Appius calls "the eloquence of dogs" should be provoked into exercise.[2] For this reason I have not been able at the present time to give to those two books dedicated to my name —books of profound erudition, and brilliant with every charm of splendid eloquence—the answer which I would otherwise have given; not that I think anything said in them demands correction, but because I am mindful of the words of the blessed apostle in regard to the variety of men's judgments, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."[3] Certainly, whatever can be said on the topics there discussed, and whatever can be drawn by commanding genius from the fountain of sacred Scripture regarding them, has been in these letters stated in your positions, and illustrated by your arguments. But I beg your Reverence to allow me for a little to praise your genius. For in any discussion between us, the

[1] The allusion is probably to the acquittal of Pelagius in 415 by the Council of Diospolis (or Lydda, a place between Joppa and Jerusalem). Augustine viewed this Council's decisions more favourably than Jerome, who denounces it without measure as a pitiful assembly, which allowed itself to be imposed upon by the evasions and feigned recantation of Pelagius; to this he makes reference in the concluding sentence of this paragraph.

[2] We adopt here the reading found in Letter CCII. *bis*, sec 3, where this sentence is quoted by Augustine in writing to Optatus, and we have "*ne* (instead of *et*) juxta Appium canina facundia exerceretur." On the phrase "canina facundia," see Lactantius, book vi. ch. 18.

[3] Rom. xiv. 5. Translated by Jerome: "Unusquisque in suo sensu abundet."

object aimed at by both of us is advancement in learning. But our rivals, and especially heretics, if they see different opinions maintained by us, will assail us with the calumny that our differences are due to mutual jealousy. For my part, however, I am resolved to love you, to look up to you, to reverence and admire you, and to defend your opinions as my own. I have also in a dialogue, which I recently published, made allusion to your Blessedness in suitable terms. Be it ours, therefore, rather to rid the Church of that most pernicious heresy which always feigns repentance, in order that it may have liberty to teach in our churches, and may not be expelled and extinguished, as it would be if it disclosed its real character in the light of day.

2. Your pious and venerable daughters, Eustochium and Paula, continue to walk worthy of their own birth and of your counsels, and they send special salutations to your Blessedness: in which they are joined by the whole brotherhood of those who with us labour to serve the Lord our Saviour. As for the holy presbyter Firmus, we sent him last year to go on business of Eustochium and Paula, first to Ravenna, and afterwards to Africa and Sicily, and we suppose that he is now detained somewhere in Africa. I beseech you to present my respectful salutations to the saints who are associated with you. I have also sent to your care a letter from me to the holy presbyter Firmus; if it reaches you, I beg you to take the trouble of forwarding it to him. May Christ the Lord keep you in safety, and mindful of me, my truly pious lord and most blessed father.

(*As a postscript.*) We suffer in this province from a grievous scarcity of clerks acquainted with the Latin language; this is the reason why we are not able to comply with your instructions, especially in regard to that version of the Septuagint which is furnished with distinctive asterisks and obelisks;[1] for we have lost, through some one's dishonesty, the most of the results of our earlier labour.

[1] Jerome probably alludes here to Augustine's request in Letter LXXI sec. 3, 4; *Letters*, vol. i. pp. 261, 262.

LETTER CLXXIII.

(A.D. 416.)

TO DONATUS, A PRESBYTER OF THE DONATIST PARTY, AUGUSTINE, A BISHOP OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, SENDS GREETING.

1. If you could see the sorrow of my heart and my concern for your salvation, you would perhaps take pity on your own soul, doing that which is pleasing to God, by giving heed to the word which is not ours but His; and would no longer give to His Scripture only a place in your memory, while shutting it out from your heart. You are angry because you are being drawn to salvation, although you have drawn so many of our fellow Christians to destruction. For what did we order beyond this, that you should be arrested, brought before the authorities, and guarded, in order to prevent you from perishing? As to your having sustained bodily injury, you have yourself to blame for this, as you would not use the horse which was immediately brought to you, and then dashed yourself violently to the ground; for, as you well know, your companion, who was brought along with you, arrived uninjured, not having done any harm to himself as you did.

2. You think, however, that even what we have done to you should not have been done, because, in your opinion, no man should be compelled to that which is good. Mark, therefore, the words of the apostle: "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work," and yet, in order to make the office of a bishop be accepted by many men, they are seized against their will,[1] subjected to importunate persuasion, shut up and detained in custody, and made to suffer so many things which they dislike, until a willingness to undertake the good work is found in them. How much more, then, is it fitting that you should be drawn forcibly away from a pernicious error, in which you are enemies to your own souls, and brought to acquaint yourselves with the truth, or to choose it when known, not only in order to your holding in a safe and advantageous way the honour belonging to your office, but

[1] An example is furnished in the case of Castorius, Letter LXIX.; *Letters*, vol. i. p. 259.

also in order to preserve you from perishing miserably! You say that God has given us free will, and that therefore no man should be compelled even to good. Why, then, are those whom I have above referred to compelled to that which is good? Take heed, therefore, to something which you do not wish to consider. The aim towards which a good will compassionately devotes its efforts is to secure that a bad will be rightly directed. For who does not know that a man is not condemned on any other ground than because his bad will deserved it, and that no man is saved who has not a good will? Nevertheless, it does not follow from this that those who are loved should be cruelly left to yield themselves with impunity to their bad will; but in so far as power is given, they ought to be both prevented from evil and compelled to good.

3. For if a bad will ought to be always left to its own freedom, why were the disobedient and murmuring Israelites restrained from evil by such severe chastisements, and compelled to come into the land of promise? If a bad will ought always to be left to its own freedom, why was Paul not left to the free use of that most perverted will with which he persecuted the Church? Why was he thrown to the ground that he might be blinded, and struck blind that he might be changed, and changed that he might be sent as an apostle, and sent that he might suffer for the truth's sake such wrongs as he had inflicted on others when he was in error? If a bad will ought always to be left to its own freedom, why is a father instructed in Holy Scripture not only to correct an obstinate son by words of rebuke, but also to beat his sides, in order that, being compelled and subdued, he may be guided to good conduct?[1] For which reason Solomon also says: "Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell."[2] If a bad will ought always to be left to its own freedom, why are negligent pastors reproved? and why is it said to them, "Ye have not brought back the wandering sheep, ye have not sought the perishing"?[3] You also are sheep belonging to Christ, you bear the Lord's mark in the sacrament which you have received, but you are wandering and perishing. Let us not, therefore, incur your displeasure

[1] Eccles. xxx. 12. [2] Prov. xxiii. 14. [3] Ezek. xxxiv. 4.

because we bring back the wandering and seek the perishing; for it is better for us to obey the will of the Lord, who charges us to compel you to return to His fold, than to yield consent to the will of the wandering sheep, so as to leave you to perish. Say not, therefore, what I hear that you are constantly saying, "I wish thus to wander, I wish thus to perish;" for it is better that we should so far as is in our power absolutely refuse to allow you to wander and perish.

4. When you threw yourself the other day into a well, in order to bring death upon yourself, you did so no doubt with your free will. But how cruel the servants of God would have been if they had left you to the fruits of this bad will, and had not delivered you from that death! Who would not have justly blamed them? Who would not have justly denounced them as inhuman? And yet you, with your own free will, threw yourself into the water that you might be drowned. They took you against your will out of the water, that you might not be drowned. You acted according to your own will, but with a view to your destruction; they dealt with you against your will, but in order to your preservation. If, therefore, mere bodily safety behoves to be so guarded that it is the duty of those who love their neighbour to preserve him even against his own will from harm, how much more is this duty binding in regard to that spiritual health in the loss of which the consequence to be dreaded is eternal death! At the same time let me remark, that in that death which you wished to bring upon yourself you would have died not for time only but for eternity, because even though force had been used to compel you—not to accept salvation, not to enter into the peace of the Church, the unity of Christ's body, the holy indivisible charity, but—to suffer some evil things, it would not have been lawful for you to take away your own life.

5. Consider the divine Scriptures, and examine them to the utmost of your ability, and see whether this was ever done by any one of the just and faithful, though subjected to the most grievous evils by persons who were endeavouring to drive them, not to eternal life, to which you are being compelled by us, but to eternal death. I have heard that you say that the Apostle Paul intimated the lawfulness of suicide when he said,

"Though I give my body to be burned,"[1] supposing that because he was there enumerating all the good things which are of no avail without charity, such as the tongues of men and of angels, and all mysteries, and all knowledge, and all prophecy, and the distribution of one's goods to the poor, he intended to include among these good things the act of bringing death upon oneself. But observe carefully and learn in what sense Scripture says that any man may give his body to be burned. Certainly not that any man may throw himself into the fire when he is harassed by a pursuing enemy, but that, when he is compelled to choose between doing wrong and suffering wrong, he should refuse to do wrong rather than to suffer wrong, and so give his body into the power of the executioner, as those three men did who were being compelled to worship the golden image, while he who was compelling them threatened them with the burning fiery furnace if they did not obey. They refused to worship the image: they did not cast themselves into the fire, and yet of them it is written that they "yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god except their own God."[2] This is the sense in which the apostle said, "If I give my body to be burned."

6. Mark also what follows:—"If I have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." To that charity you are called; by that charity you are prevented from perishing: and yet you think, forsooth, that to throw yourself headlong to destruction, by your own act, will profit you in some measure, although, even if you suffered death at the hands of another, while you remain an enemy to charity it would profit you nothing. Nay, more, being in a state of exclusion from the Church, and severed from the body of unity and the bond of charity, you would be punished with eternal misery even though you were burned alive for Christ's name; for this is the apostle's declaration, "Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Bring your mind back, therefore, to rational reflection and sober thought; consider carefully whether it is to error and to impiety that you are being called, and, if you still think so, submit patiently to any

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 3. [2] Dan. iii. 28.

hardship for the truth's sake. If, however, the fact rather be that you are living in error and in impiety, and that in the Church to which you are called truth and piety are found, because there is Christian unity and the love (*charitas*) of the Holy Spirit, why do you labour any longer to be an enemy to yourself?

7. For this end the mercy of the Lord appointed that both we and your bishops met at Carthage in a conference which had repeated meetings, and was largely attended, and reasoned together in the most orderly manner in regard to the grounds of our separation from each other. The proceedings of that conference were written down; our signatures are attached to the record: read it, or allow others to read it to you, and then choose which party you prefer. I have heard that you have said that you could to some extent discuss the statements in that record with us if we would omit these words of your bishops: "No case forecloses the investigation of another case, and no person compromises the position of another person." You wish us to leave out these words, in which, although they knew it not, the truth itself spoke by them. You will say, indeed, that here they made a mistake, and fell through want of consideration into a false opinion. But we affirm that here they said what was true, and we prove this very easily by a reference to yourself. For if in regard to these bishops of your own, chosen by the whole party of Donatus on the understanding that they should act as representatives, and that all the rest should regard whatever they did as acceptable and satisfactory, you nevertheless refuse to allow them to compromise your position by what you think to have been a rash and mistaken utterance on their part, in this refusal you confirm the truth of their saying: "No case forecloses the investigation of another case, and no person compromises the position of another person." And at the same time you ought to acknowledge, that if you refuse to allow the conjoint authority of so many of your bishops represented in these seven to compromise Donatus, presbyter in Mutugenna, it is incomparably less reasonable that one person, Cæcilianus, even had some evil been found in him, should compromise the position of the whole unity of Christ, the Church, which

is not shut up within the one village of Mutugenna, but spread abroad throughout the entire world.

8. But, behold, we do what you have desired; we treat with you as if your bishops had not said: "No case forecloses the investigation of another case, and no person compromises the position of another person." Discover, if you can, what they ought, rather than this, to have said in reply, when there was alleged against them the case and the person of Primianus,[1] who, notwithstanding his joining the rest of the bishops in passing sentence of condemnation on those who had passed sentence of condemnation upon him, nevertheless received back into their former honours those whom he had condemned and denounced, and chose to acknowledge and accept rather than despise and repudiate the baptism administered by these men while they were "dead" (for of them it was said in the notable decree [of the Council of Bagai], that "the shores were full of dead men"), and by so doing swept away the argument which you are accustomed to rest on a perverse interpretation of the words: "Qui baptizatur a mortuo quid ei prodest lavacrum ejus?"[2] If, therefore, your bishops had not said: "No case forecloses the investigation of another case, and no person compromises the position of another person," they would have been compelled to plead guilty in the case of Primianus; but, in saying this, they declared the Catholic Church to be, as we mentioned, not guilty in the case of Cæcilianus.

9. However, read all the rest and examine it well. Mark whether they have succeeded in proving any charge of evil

[1] Primianus, Donatist bishop in Carthage, was in 393 deposed by a factious clique of bishops, who appointed Maximianus in his place. The other Donatist bishops, however, assembled in the following year at Bagai in Numidia, and, reversing the decision of their co-bishops, deposed them in turn, and passed a sentence to which, as stated in the text, they did not inexorably adhere. The matter is referred to in Letter XLIII., vol. i. p. 160.

[2] Ecclus. xxxiv. 25, translated, accurately enough, in our English version: "He that washeth himself after touching a dead body, if he touch it again, what availeth his washing?" The Donatist, in quoting the passage to support their practice of re-baptizing Catholics, omitted the clause, "et iterum tangit mortuum," and translated the sentence thus: "He that is baptized by one who is dead, what availeth his baptism?" It would be difficult to quote from the annals of controversy a more flagrant example of ignorant ingenuity in the wresting of words to serve a purpose.

brought against Cæcilianus himself, through whose person they attempted to compromise the position of the Church. Mark whether they have not rather brought forward much that was in his favour, and confirmed the evidence that his case was a good one, by a number of extracts which, to the prejudice of their own case, they produced and read. Read these, or let them be read to you. Consider the whole matter, ponder it carefully, and choose which you should follow: whether you should, in the peace of Christ, in the unity of the Catholic Church, in the love of the brethren, be partaker of our joy, or, in the cause of wicked discord, the Donatist faction and impious schism, continue to suffer the annoyance caused to you by the measures which out of love to you we are compelled to take.

10. I hear that you have remarked and often quote the fact recorded in the gospels, that the seventy disciples went back from the Lord, and that they had been left to their own choice in this wicked and impious desertion, and that to the twelve who alone remained the Lord said, "Will ye also go away?"[1] But you have neglected to remark, that at that time the Church was only beginning to burst into life from the recently planted seed, and that there was not yet fulfilled in her the prophecy: "All kings shall fall down before Him; yea, all nations shall serve Him;"[2] and it is in proportion to the more enlarged accomplishment of this prophecy that the Church wields greater power, so that she may not only invite, but even compel men to embrace what is good. This our Lord intended then to illustrate, for although He had great power, He chose rather to manifest His humility. This also He taught, with sufficient plainness, in the parable of the Feast, in which the master of the house, after he had sent a message to the invited guests, and they had refused to come, said to his servants: "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my

[1] John vi. 67. [2] Ps. lxxii. 11.

house may be filled."[1] Mark, now, how it was said in regard to those who came first, "bring them in;" it was not said, "compel them to come in,"—by which was signified the incipient condition of the Church, when it was only growing towards the position in which it would have strength to compel men to come in. Accordingly, because it was right that when the Church had been strengthened, both in power and in extent, men should be compelled to come in to the feast of everlasting salvation, it was afterwards added in the parable, "The servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said unto the servants, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in." Wherefore, if you were walking peaceably, absent from this feast of everlasting salvation and of the holy unity of the Church, we should find you, as it were, in the "highways;" but since, by multiplied injuries and cruelties, which you perpetrate on our people, you are, as it were, full of thorns and roughness, we find you as it were in the "hedges," and we compel you to come in. The sheep which is compelled is driven whither it would not wish to go, but after it has entered, it feeds of its own accord in the pastures to which it was brought. Wherefore restrain your perverse and rebellious spirit, that in the true Church of Christ you may find the feast of salvation.

LETTER CLXXX.

(A.D. 416.)

TO OCEANUS, HIS DESERVEDLY BELOVED LORD AND BROTHER, HONOURED AMONG THE MEMBERS OF CHRIST, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING.

1. I RECEIVED two letters from you at the same time, in one of which you mention a third, and state that you had sent it before the others. This letter I do not remember having received, or, rather, I think I may say the testimony of my memory is, that I did not receive it; but in regard to those which I have received, I return you many thanks for your kindness to me. To these I would have returned an

[1] Luke xiv. 21–23.

immediate answer, had I not been hurried away by a constant succession of other matters urgently demanding attention. Having now found a moment's leisure from these, I have chosen rather to send some reply, however imperfect, than continue towards a friend so true and kind a protracted silence, and become more annoying to you by saying nothing than by saying too much.

2. I already knew the opinion of the holy Jerome as to the origin of souls, and had read the words which in your letter you have quoted from his book. The difficulty which perplexes some in regard to this question, "How God can justly bestow souls on the offspring of persons guilty of adultery?" does not embarrass me, seeing that not even their own sins, much less the sins of their parents, can prove prejudicial to persons of virtuous lives, converted to God, and living in faith and piety. The really difficult question is, if it be true that a new soul created out of nothing is imparted to each child at its birth, how can it be that the innumerable souls of those little ones, in regard to whom God knew with certainty that before attaining the age of reason, and before being able to know or understand what is right or wrong, they were to leave the body without being baptized, are justly given over to eternal death by Him with whom "there is no unrighteousness!"[1] It is unnecessary to say more on this subject, since you know what I intend, or rather what I do not at present intend to say. I think what I have said is enough for a wise man. If, however, you have either read, or heard from the lips of Jerome, or received from the Lord when meditating on this difficult question, anything by which it can be solved, impart it to me, I beseech you, that I may acknowledge myself under yet greater obligation to you.

3. As to the question whether lying is in any case justifiable and expedient, it has appeared to you that it ought to be solved by the example of our Lord's saying, concerning the day and hour of the end of the world, "Neither doth the Son know it."[2] When I read this, I was charmed with it as an effort of your ingenuity; but I am by no means of opinion that a figurative mode of expression can be rightly termed a

[1] Rom. ix. 14. [2] Mark xiii. 32.

falsehood. For it is no falsehood to call a day joyous because it renders men joyous, or a lupine harsh because by its bitter flavour it imparts harshness to the countenance of him who tastes it, or to say that God knows something when He makes man know it (an instance quoted by yourself in these words of God to Abraham, "Now I know that thou fearest God").[1] These are by no means false statements, as you yourself readily see. Accordingly, when the blessed Hilary explained this obscure statement of the Lord, by means of this obscure kind of figurative language, saying that we ought to understand Christ to affirm in these words that He knew not that day with no other meaning than that He, by concealing it, caused others not to know it, he did not by this explanation of the statement apologize for it as an excusable falsehood, but he showed that it was not a falsehood, as is proved by comparing it not only with these common figures of speech, but also with the metaphor, a mode of expression very familiar to all in daily conversation. For who will charge the man who says that harvest fields *wave* and children *bloom* with speaking falsely, because he sees not in these things the waves and the flowers to which these words are literally applied?

4. Moreover, a man of your talent and learning easily perceives how different from these metaphorical expressions is the statement of the apostle, "When I saw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"[2] Here there is no obscurity of figurative language; these are literal words of a plain statement. Surely, in addressing persons "of whom he travailed in birth till Christ should be formed in them,"[3] and to whom, in solemnly calling God to confirm his words, he said: "The things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not,"[4] the great teacher of the Gentiles affirmed in the words above quoted either what was true or what was false; if he said what was false, which God forbid, you see the consequences which would follow; and Paul's own assertion of his veracity, together with the example

[1] Gen. xxii. 12. [2] Gal. ii. 14. [3] Gal. iv. 19. [4] Gal. i. 20.

of wondrous humility in the Apostle Peter, may warn you to recoil from such thoughts.[1]

5. But why say more? This question the venerable Father Jerome and I have discussed fully in letters[2] which we exchanged, and in his latest work, published under the name of *Critobulus*, against Pelagius,[3] he has maintained the same opinion concerning that transaction and the words of the apostle which, in accordance with the views of the blessed Cyprian,[4] I myself have held. In regard to the question as to the origin of souls, I think there is reasonable ground for inquiry, not as to the giving of souls to the offspring of adulterous parents, but as to the condemnation (which God forbid) of those who are innocent. If you have learned anything from a man of such character and eminence as Jerome which might form a satisfactory answer to those in perplexity on this subject, I pray you not to refuse to communicate it to me. In your correspondence, you have approved yourself so learned and so affable that it is a privilege to hold intercourse with you by letter. I ask you not to delay to send a certain book by the same man of God, which the presbyter Orosius brought and gave to you to copy, in which the resurrection of the body is treated of by him in a manner said to merit distinguished praise. We have not asked it earlier, because we knew that you had both to copy and to revise it; but for both of these we think we have now given you ample time.

Live to God, and be mindful of us.

[For translation of Letter CLXXXV. to Count Boniface, containing an exhaustive history of the Donatist schism, see *Anti-Donatist Writings*, vol. i. pp. 479–520.]

[1] We have left the word *ambo* in "ambo ista exhorrescas" untranslated. Critics are agreed that a few words of the original are probably wanting here, only one alternative of the dilemma being stated by St. Augustine in the text.

[2] In Letters XXVIII., XL., LXXV., and LXXXII., translated in vol. i.

[3] *Adversus Pelagium*, book i.

[4] *Letters* of Cyprian, LXXI.

LETTER CLXXXVIII.

(A.D. 416.)

TO THE LADY JULIANA, WORTHY TO BE HONOURED IN CHRIST WITH THE SERVICE DUE TO HER RANK, OUR DAUGHTER DESERVEDLY DISTINGUISHED, ALYPIUS AND AUGUSTINE SEND GREETING IN THE LORD.

CHAP. I. 1. Lady, worthy to be honoured in Christ with the service due to your rank, and daughter deservedly distinguished, it was very pleasant and agreeable to us that your letter reached us when together at Hippo, so that we might send this joint reply to you, to express our joy in hearing of your welfare, and with sincere reciprocation of your love to let you know of our welfare, in which we are sure that you take an affectionate interest. We are well aware that you are not ignorant how great Christian affection we consider due to you, and how much, both before God and among men, we are interested in you. For though we knew you, at first by letter, afterwards by personal intercourse, to be pious and Catholic, that is, true members of the body of Christ, nevertheless, our humble ministry also was of use to you, for when you had received the word of God from us, "you received it," as says the apostle, "not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God."[1] Through the grace and mercy of the Saviour, so great was the fruit arising from this ministry of ours in your family, that when preparations for her marriage[2] were already completed, the holy Demetrias preferred the spiritual embrace of that Husband who is fairer than the sons of men, and in espousing themselves to whom virgins retain their virginity, and gain more abundant spiritual fruitfulness. We should not, however, yet have known how this exhortation of ours had been received by the faithful and noble maiden, as we departed shortly before she took on her the vow of chastity, had we not learned from the joyful announcement and

[1] 1 Thess. ii. 13.

[2] In a letter of Jerome (the eighth) addressed to Demetrias, we have a very graphic narrative of the manner in which Demetrias formed and carried into effect the vow for which she is here commended.

reliable testimony of your letter, that this great gift of God, planted and watered indeed by means of His servants, but owing its increase to Himself, had been granted to us as labourers in His vineyard.

2. Since these things are so, no one may charge us with presuming, if, on the ground of this closer spiritual relation, we manifest our solicitude for your welfare by warning you to avoid opinions opposed to the grace of God. For though the apostle commands us in preaching the word to be "instant in season and out of season,"[1] yet we do not reckon you among the number of those to whom a word or a letter from us exhorting you carefully to avoid what is inconsistent with sound doctrine would seem "out of season." Hence it was that you received our admonition in so kindly a manner, that, in the letter to which we are now replying, you say, "I thank you heartily for the pious advice which your Reverence gave me, not to lend an ear to those men who, by their mischievous writings, often corrupt our holy faith."

3. In this letter you go on to say, "But your Reverence knows that I and my household are entirely separated from persons of this description; and all our family follow so strictly the Catholic faith as never at any time to have wandered from it, or fallen into any heresy,—I speak not of the heresy of sects who have erred in a measure hardly admitting of expiation, but of those whose errors seem to be trivial." This statement renders it more and more necessary for us, in writing to you, not to pass over in silence the conduct of those who are attempting to corrupt even those who are sound in the faith. We consider your house to be no insignificant Church of Christ, nor indeed is the error of those men trivial who think that we have of ourselves whatever righteousness, temperance, piety, chastity is in us, on the ground that God has so formed us, that beyond the revelation which He has given He imparts to us no further aid for performing by our own choice those things which by study we have ascertained to be our duty; declaring nature and knowledge to be the grace of God, and the only aid for living righteously and justly. For the possession, indeed, of a will inclined to what

[1] 2 Tim. iii. 2.

is good, whence proceed the life of uprightness and that love which so far excels all other gifts that God Himself is said to be love, and by which alone is fulfilled in us as far as we fulfil them, the divine law and counsel,—for the possession, I say, of such a will, they hold that we are not indebted to the aid of God, but affirm that we ourselves of our own will are sufficient for these things. Let it not appear to you a trifling error that men should wish to profess themselves Christians, and yet be unwilling to hear the apostle of Christ, who, having said, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts," lest any one should think that he had this love through his own free will, immediately subjoined, "by the Holy Spirit who is given unto us."[1] Understand, then, how greatly and how fatally that man errs who does not acknowledge that this is the "great gift of the Saviour,"[2] who, when He ascended on high, "led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men."[3]

CHAP. II. 4. How, then, could we so far conceal our true feelings as not to warn you, in whom we feel so deep an interest, to beware of such doctrines, after we had read a certain book addressed to the holy Demetrias? Whether this book has reached you,[4] and who is its author, we are desirous to hear in your answer to this. In this book, were it lawful for such a one to read it, a virgin of Christ would read that her holiness and all her spiritual riches are to spring from no other source than herself, and thus, before she attains to the perfection of blessedness, she would learn, —which may God forbid!—to be ungrateful to God. For the words addressed to her in the said book are these:—"You have here, then, those things on account of which you are deservedly, nay more, more especially to be preferred before others; for your earthly rank and wealth are understood to be derived from your relatives, not from yourself, but your spiritual riches no one can have conferred on you but yourself; for these, then, you are justly to be praised, for these you

[1] Rom. v. 5. [2] Eph. iv. 7. [3] Ps. lxviii. 18.

[4] In the end of this letter, Augustine distinctly ascribes to Pelagius the authorship of the letter to Demetrias, as also in his work on *The Grace of Christ*, ch. xxii.

are deservedly to be preferred to others, for they can exist only from yourself, and in yourself."[1]

5. You see, doubtless, how dangerous is the doctrine in these words, against which you must be on your guard. For the affirmation, indeed, that these spiritual riches can exist only in yourself, is very well and truly said: that evidently is food; but the affirmation that they cannot exist except from you is unmixed poison. Far be it from any virgin of Christ willingly to listen to statements like these. Every virgin of Christ understands the innate poverty of the human heart, and therefore declines to have it adorned otherwise than by the gifts of her Spouse. Let her rather listen to the apostle when he says: "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."[2] And therefore in regard to these spiritual riches let her listen, not to him who says: "No one can confer them on you except yourself, and they cannot exist except from you and in you;" but to him who says: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."[3]

6. In regard to that sacred virginal chastity, also, which does not belong to her from herself, but is the gift of God, bestowed, however, on her who is believing and willing, let her hear the same truthful and pious teacher, who when he treats of this subject says: "I would that all men were even as I myself: but every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that."[4] Let her hear also Him who is the only Spouse, not only of herself, but of the whole Church, thus speaking of this chastity and purity: "All cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given;"[5] that she may understand that for her possession of this so great and excellent gift, she ought rather to render thanks to our God and Lord, than to listen to the words of any one who says that she possessed it from herself,—words which we may not designate as those of a

[1] *Epistle to Demetrias*, ch. xi. [2] 2 Cor. xi. 2, 3. [3] 2 Cor. iv. 7.
[4] 1 Cor. vii. 7. [5] Matt. xix. 11.

flatterer, seeking to please, lest we seem to judge rashly concerning the hidden thoughts of men, but which are assuredly those of a misguided eulogist. For "every good gift and every perfect gift," as the Apostle James says, "is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights;"[1] from this source, therefore, cometh this holy virginity, in which you who approve of it, and rejoice in it, have been excelled by your daughter, who, coming after you in birth, has gone before you in conduct; descended from you in lineage, has risen above you in honour; following you in age, has gone beyond you in holiness; in whom also that begins to be yours which could not be in your own person. For she did not contract an earthly marriage, that she might be, not for herself only, but also for you, spiritually enriched in a higher degree than yourself, since you, even with this addition, are inferior to her, because you contracted the marriage of which she is the offspring. These things are gifts of God, and are yours indeed, but are not from yourselves; for you have this treasure in earthly bodies, which are still frail as the vessels of the potter, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of you. And be not surprised because we say that these things are yours, and not from you, for we speak of "daily bread" as ours, but yet add,[2] "give it to us," lest it should be thought that it was from ourselves.

7. Wherefore obey the precept of Scripture, "Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks;"[3] for you pray in order that you may have constantly and increasingly these gifts, you render thanks because you have them not of yourself. For who separates you from that mass of death and perdition derived from Adam? Is it not He "who came to seek and to save that which was lost?"[4] Was, then, a man, indeed, on hearing the apostle's question, "Who maketh thee to differ?" to reply, "My own good will, my faith, my righteousness," and to disregard what immediately follows? "What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?"[5] We are unwilling, then, yea, utterly

[1] Jas. i. 17. [2] Luke xi. 3. [3] 1 Thess. v. 17, 18.
[4] Luke xix. 10. [5] 1 Cor. iv. 7.

unwilling, that a consecrated virgin, when she hears or reads these words: "Your spiritual riches no one can have conferred on you; for these you are justly to be praised, for these you are deservedly to be preferred to others, for they can exist only from yourself, and in yourself," should thus boast of her riches as if she had not received them. Let her say, indeed, "In me are thy vows, O God, I will render praises unto Thee;"[1] but since they are *in* her, not *from* her, let her remember also to say, "Lord, by Thy will Thou hast furnished strength to my beauty,"[2] because, though it be from her, inasmuch as it is the acting of her own will, without which we cannot do what is good, yet we are not to say, as he said, that it is "only from her." For our own will, unless it be aided by the grace of God, cannot alone be even in name good will, for, says the apostle, "it is God who worketh in us, both to will, and to do according to good will,"[3]—not, as these persons think, merely by revealing knowledge, that we may know what we ought to do, but also by inspiring Christian love, that we may also by choice perform the things which by study we have learned.

8. For doubtless the value of the gift of continence was known to him who said, "I perceived that no man can be continent unless God bestowed the gift." He not only knew then how great a benefit it was, and how eagerly it ought to be coveted, but also that, unless God gave it, it could not exist; for wisdom had taught him this, for he says, "This also was a point of wisdom, to know whose gift it was;" and the knowledge did not suffice him, but he says, "I went to the Lord and made my supplication to Him."[4] God then aids us in this matter, not only by making us know what is to be done, but also by making us do through love what we already know through learning. No one, therefore, can possess, not only knowledge, but also continence, unless God give it to him. Whence it was that when he had knowledge he prayed that he might have continence, that it might be in him, because he knew that it was not from him; or if on account of the freedom of his will it was in a certain sense from himself, yet it was

[1] Ps. lvi. 12. [2] Ps. xxx. 7, LXX. [3] Phil. ii. 13. [4] Wisd. viii. 21.

not from himself alone, because no one can be continent unless God bestow on him the gift. But he whose opinions I am censuring, in speaking of spiritual riches, among which is doubtless that bright and beautiful gift of continence, does not say that they may exist in you, and from yourself, but says that they can exist *only* from you, and in you, in such a way that, as a virgin of Christ has these things nowhere else than in herself, so it can be believed possible for her to have them from no other source than from herself, and in this way (which may a merciful God avert from her heart!) she shall so boast as if she had not received them!

CHAP. III. 9. We indeed hold such an opinion concerning the training of this holy virgin, and the Christian humility in which she was nourished and brought up, as to be assured that when she read these words, if she did read them, she would break out into lamentations, and humbly smite her breast, and perhaps burst into tears, and pray in faith to the Lord to whose service she was dedicated and by whom she was sanctified, pleading with Him that these were not her own words, but another's, and asking that her faith might not be such as to believe that she had anything whereof to glory in herself and not in the Lord. For her glory is in herself, not in the words of another, as the apostle says: "Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have glory (rejoicing) in himself alone, and not in another.[1]" But God forbid that her glory should be in herself, and not in Him to whom the Psalmist says, "Thou art my glory, and the lifter up of mine head."[2] For her glory is then profitably in herself, when God, who is in her, is Himself her glory, from whom she has every good, by which she is good, and shall have all things by which she shall be made better, in as far as she may become better in this life, and by which she shall be made perfect when rendered so by divine grace, not by human praise. "For her soul shall be praised in the Lord,"[3] "who satisfieth her desire with good things,"[4] because He Himself has inspired this desire, that His virgin should not boast of any good, as if she had not received it.

10. Inform us, then, in reply to this letter, whether we have judged truly in supposing these to be your daughter's senti-

[1] Gal. vi. 4. [2] Ps. iii. 3. [3] Ps. xxxiv. 2. [4] Ps. ciii. 5.

ments. For we know well that you and all your family are, and have been, worshippers of the indivisible Trinity. But human error insinuates itself in other forms than in erroneous opinions concerning the indivisible Trinity. There are other subjects also, in regard to which men fall into very dangerous errors. As, for example, that of which we have spoken in this letter at greater length, perhaps, than might have sufficed to a person of your stedfast and pure wisdom. And yet we know not to whom, except to God, and therefore to the Trinity, wrong is done by the man who denies that the good that comes from God is from God; which evil may God avert from you, as we believe He does! May God altogether forbid that the book out of which we have thought it our duty to extract some words, that they might be more easily understood, should produce any such impression, we do not say on your mind, or on that of the holy virgin your daughter, but on the mind of the least deserving of your male or female servants.

11. But if you study more carefully even those words in which the writer appears to speak in favour of grace or the aid of God, you will find them so ambiguous that they may have reference either to nature or to knowledge, or to forgiveness of sins. For even in regard to that which they are forced to acknowledge, that we ought to pray that we may not enter into temptation, they may consider that the words mean that we are so far helped to it that, by our praying and knocking, the knowledge of the truth is so revealed to us that we may learn what it is our duty to do, not so far as that our will receives strength, whereby we may do that which we learn to be our duty; and as to their saying that it is by the grace or help of God that the Lord Christ has been set before us as an example of holy living, they interpret this so as to teach the same doctrine, affirming, namely, that we learn by His example how we ought to live, but denying that we are so aided as to do through love what we know by learning.

12. Find in this book, if you can, anything in which, excepting nature and the freedom of the will (which pertains to the same nature), and the remission of sin and the revealing of doctrine, any such aid of God is acknowledged as that which he acknowledges who said: "When I perceived that

no man can be continent unless God bestow the gift, and that this also is a point of wisdom to know whose gift it is, I went to the Lord, and made my supplication to Him."[1] For he did not desire to receive, in answer to his prayer, the nature in which he was made; nor was he solicitous to obtain the natural freedom of the will with which he was made; nor did he crave the remission of sins, seeing that he prayed rather for continence, that he might not sin; nor did he desire to know what he ought to do, seeing that he already confessed that he knew whose gift this continence was; but he wished to receive from the Spirit of wisdom such strength of will, such ardour of love, as should suffice for fully practising the great virtue of continence. If, therefore, you succeed in finding any such statement in that book, we will heartily thank you if, in your answer, you deign to inform us of it.

13. It is impossible for us to tell how greatly we desire to find in the writings of these men, whose works are read by very many for their pungency and eloquence, the open confession of that grace which the apostle vehemently commends, who says that "God has given to every man the measure of faith,"[2] "without which it is impossible to please God,"[3] "by which the just live,"[4] "which worketh by love,"[5] before which and without which no works of any man are in any respect to be reckoned good, since "whatsoever is not of faith is sin."[6] He affirms that God distributes to every man,[7] and that we receive divine assistance to live piously and justly, not only by the revelation of that knowledge which without charity "puffeth up,"[8] but by our being inspired with that "love which is the fulfilling of the law,"[9] and which so edifies our heart that knowledge does not puff it up. But hitherto I have failed to find any such statements in the writings of these men.

14. But especially we should wish that these sentiments should be found in that book from which we have quoted the words in which the author, praising a virgin of Christ as if no one except herself could confer on her spiritual riches, and

[1] Wisd. viii. 21. [2] Rom. xii. 3. [3] Heb. xi. 6.
[4] Rom. i. 17. [5] Gal. v. 6. [6] Rom. xiv. 23.
[7] Rom. xii. 3. [8] 1 Cor. viii. 1. [9] Rom. xiii. 10.

as if these could not exist except from herself, does not wish her to glory in the Lord, but to glory as if she had not received them. In this book, though it contain neither his name nor your own honoured name, he nevertheless mentions that a request had been made to him by the mother of the virgin to write to her. In a certain epistle of his, however, to which he openly attaches his name, and does not conceal the name of the sacred virgin, the same Pelagius says that he had written to her, and endeavours to prove, by appealing to the said work, that he most openly confessed the grace of God, which he is alleged to have passed over in silence, or denied. But we beg you to condescend to inform us, in your reply, whether that be the very book in which he has inserted these words about spiritual riches, and whether it has reached your Holiness.

LETTER CLXXXIX.

(A.D. 418.)

TO BONIFACE,[1] MY NOBLE LORD AND JUSTLY DISTINGUISHED AND HONOURABLE SON, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. I HAD already written a reply to your Charity, but while I was waiting for an opportunity of forwarding the letter, my

[1] Count Boniface, to whom St. Augustine also addressed Letters CLXXXV. and CCXX., was governor of the province of Africa under Placidia, who for twenty-five years ruled the empire in the name of her son Valentinian. By his perfidious rival Aetius, Boniface was persuaded to disobey the order of Placidia, when, under the instigation of Aetius himself, she recalled him from the government of Africa. The necessity of powerful allies in order to maintain his position led him to invite the Vandals to pass from Spain into Africa. They came, under Genseric, and the fertile provinces of Northern Africa fell an easy prey to their invading armies. When the treachery of Aetius was discovered, Placidia received Boniface again into favour, and he devoted all his military talents to the task of expelling the barbarians whom his own invitation had made masters of North Africa. But it was now too late to wrest this Roman province from the Vandals; defeated in a great battle, Boniface was compelled in 430 to retire into Hippo Regius, where he succeeded in resisting the besieging army for fourteen months. It was during this siege, and after it had continued three months, that Augustine died. Reinforced by troops from Constantinople, Boniface fought one more desperate but unsuccessful battle, after which he left Hippo in the hands of Genseric, and returned by order of Placidia to Italy. For fuller particulars of his history, see Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ch. xxxiii.

beloved son Faustus arrived here on his way to your Excellency. After he had received the letter which I had intended to be carried by him to your Benevolence, he stated to me that you were very desirous that I should write you something which might build you up unto the eternal salvation of which you have hope in Christ Jesus our Lord. And, although I was busily occupied at the time, he insisted, with an earnestness corresponding to the love which, as you know, he bears to you, that I should do this without delay. To meet his convenience, therefore, as he was in haste to depart, I thought it better to write, though necessarily without much time for reflection, rather than put off the gratification of your pious desire, my noble lord and justly distinguished and honourable son.

2. All is contained in these brief sentences: "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength: and love thy neighbour as thyself;"[1] for these are the words in which the Lord, when on earth, gave an epitome of religion, saying in the gospel, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Daily advance, then, in this love, both by praying and by well-doing, that through the help of Him who enjoined it on you, and whose gift it is, it may be nourished and increased, until, being perfected, it render you perfect. "For this is the love which," as the apostle says, "is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us."[2] This is "the fulfilling of the law;"[3] this is the same love by which faith works, of which he says again, "Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith, which worketh by love."[4]

3. In this love, then, all our holy fathers, patriarchs, prophets, and apostles pleased God. In this all true martyrs contended against the devil even to the shedding of blood, and because in them it neither waxed cold nor failed, they became conquerors. In this all true believers daily make progress, seeking to acquire not an earthly kingdom, but the kingdom of heaven; not a temporal, but an eternal inheritance; not gold and silver, but the incorruptible riches of the angels; not the good things of this life, which are enjoyed with

[1] Matt. xxii. 37–40. [2] Rom. v. 5. [3] Rom. xiii. 10. [4] Gal. v. 6.

trembling, and which no one can take with him when he dies, but the vision of God, whose grace and power of imparting felicity transcend all beauty of form in bodies not only on earth but also in heaven, transcend all spiritual loveliness in men, however just and holy, transcend all the glory of the angels and powers of the world above, transcend not only all that language can express, but all that thought can imagine concerning Him. And let us not despair of the fulfilment of such a great promise because it is exceeding great, but rather believe that we shall receive it because He who has promised it is exceeding great, as the blessed Apostle John says: "Now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."[1]

4. Do not think that it is impossible for any one to please God while engaged in active military service. Among such persons was the holy David, to whom God gave so great a testimony; among them also were many righteous men of that time; among them was also that centurion who said to the Lord: "I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof, but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed: for I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it;" and concerning whom the Lord said: "Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."[2] Among them was that Cornelius to whom an angel said: "Cornelius, thine alms are accepted, and thy prayers are heard,"[3] when he directed him to send to the blessed Apostle Peter, and to hear from him what he ought to do, to which apostle he sent a devout soldier, requesting him to come to him. Among them were also the soldiers who, when they had come to be baptized by John,—the sacred forerunner of the Lord, and the friend of the Bridegroom, of whom the Lord says: "Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist,"[4]—and had inquired of him what they should do, received the answer, "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely;

[1] 1 John iii. 2. [2] Matt. viii. 8–10. [3] Acts x. 4. [4] Matt. xi. 11.

and be content with your wages."[1] Certainly he did not prohibit them to serve as soldiers when he commanded them to be content with their pay for the service.

5. They occupy indeed a higher place before God who, abandoning all these secular employments, serve Him with the strictest chastity; but "every one," as the apostle says, "hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that."[2] Some, then, in praying for you, fight against your invisible enemies; you, in fighting for them, contend against the barbarians, their visible enemies. Would that one faith existed in all, for then there would be less weary struggling, and the devil with his angels would be more easily conquered; but since it is necessary in this life that the citizens of the kingdom of heaven should be subjected to temptations among erring and impious men, that they may be exercised, and "tried as gold in the furnace,"[3] we ought not before the appointed time to desire to live with those alone who are holy and righteous, so that, by patience, we may deserve to receive this blessedness in its proper time.

6. Think, then, of this first of all, when you are arming for the battle, that even your bodily strength is a gift of God; for, considering this, you will not employ the gift of God against God. For, when faith is pledged, it is to be kept even with the enemy against whom the war is waged, how much more with the friend for whom the battle is fought! Peace should be the object of your desire; war should be waged only as a necessity, and waged only that God may by it deliver men from the necessity and preserve them in peace. For peace is not sought in order to the kindling of war, but war is waged in order that peace may be obtained. Therefore, even in waging war, cherish the spirit of a peace-maker, that, by conquering those whom you attack, you may lead them back to the advantages of peace; for our Lord says: "Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God."[4] If, however, peace among men be so sweet as procuring temporal safety, how much sweeter is that peace with God which procures for men the eternal felicity of the angels! Let necessity,

[1] Luke iii. 14. [2] 1 Cor. vii. 7. [3] Wisd. iii. 6. [4] Matt. v. 9.

therefore, and not your will, slay the enemy who fights against you. As violence is used towards him who rebels and resists, so mercy is due to the vanquished or the captive, especially in the case in which future troubling of the peace is not to be feared.

7. Let the manner of your life be adorned by chastity, sobriety, and moderation; for it is exceedingly disgraceful that lust should subdue him whom man finds invincible, and that wine should overpower him whom the sword assails in vain. As to worldly riches, if you do not possess them, let them not be sought after on earth by doing evil; and if you possess them, let them by good works be laid up in heaven. The manly and Christian spirit ought neither to be elated by the accession, nor crushed by the loss of this world's treasures. Let us rather think of what the Lord says: "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also;"[1] and certainly, when we hear the exhortation to lift up our hearts, it is our duty to give unfeignedly the response which you know that we are accustomed to give.[2]

8. In these things, indeed, I know that you are very careful, and the good report which I hear of you fills me with great delight, and moves me to congratulate you on account of it in the Lord. This letter, therefore, may serve rather as a mirror in which you may see what you are, than as a directory from which to learn what you ought to be: nevertheless, whatever you may discover, either from this letter or from the Holy Scriptures, to be still wanting to you in regard to a holy life, persevere in urgently seeking it both by effort and by prayer; and for the things which you have, give thanks to God as the Fountain of goodness, whence you have received them; in every good action let the glory be given to God, and humility be exercised by you, for, as it is written, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and

[1] Matt. vi. 21.

[2] The allusion is evidently to the ancient formulary in public worship, first mentioned by Cyprian in his treatise on the Lord's Prayer. To the presbyter's exhortation, "Sursum corda!" the people responded, "Habemus ad Dominum." For an account of this formulary and a most beautiful exposition of it, quoted from Cyril of Jerusalem, see Riddle's *Christian Antiquities*, book IV. ch. i. sec. 2.

cometh down from the Father of lights."[1] But however much you may advance in the love of God and of your neighbour, and in true piety, do not imagine, as long as you are in this life, that you are without sin, for concerning this we read in Holy Scripture: "Is not the life of man upon earth a life of temptation?"[2] Wherefore, since always, as long as you are in this body, it is necessary for you to say in prayer, as the Lord taught us: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,"[3] remember quickly to forgive, if any one shall do you wrong and shall ask pardon from you, that you may be able to pray sincerely, and may prevail in seeking pardon for your own sins.

These things, my beloved friend, I have written to you in haste, as the anxiety of the bearer to depart urged me not to detain him; but I thank God that I have in some measure complied with your pious wish. May the mercy of God ever protect you, my noble lord and justly distinguished son.

LETTER CXCI.

(A.D. 418.)

TO MY VENERABLE LORD AND PIOUS BROTHER AND CO-PRESBYTER SIXTUS,[4] WORTHY OF BEING RECEIVED IN THE LOVE OF CHRIST, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. SINCE the arrival of the letter which, in my absence, your Grace forwarded by our holy brother the presbyter Firmus, and which I read on my return to Hippo, but not until after the bearer had departed, the present is my first opportunity of sending to you any reply, and it is with great pleasure that I entrust it to our very dearly beloved son, the acolyte Albinus. Your letter, addressed to Alypius and myself jointly, came at a time when we were not together, and this is the reason why

[1] Jas. i. 17. [2] Job vii. 1, LXX. [3] Matt. vi. 12.

[4] Sixtus, afterwards Sixtus III., Bishop of Rome, the immediate successor of Cælestine, to whom the next letter is addressed. His name is the forty-third in the list of Popes, and he was in office from 432 to 440 A.D. The 194th letter of Augustine was addressed to the same Sixtus, and is a very elaborate dissertation on Pelagianism. It is omitted from this selection as being rather a theological treatise than a letter.

you will now receive a letter from each of us, instead of one from both, in reply. For the bearer of this letter has just gone, meanwhile, from me to visit my venerable brother and co-bishop Alypius, who will write a reply for himself to your Holiness, and he has carried with him your letter, which I had already perused. As to the great joy with which that letter filled my heart, why should a man attempt to say what it is impossible to express? Indeed, I do not think that you yourself have any adequate idea of the amount of good done by your sending that letter to us; but take our word for it, for as you bear witness to your feelings, so do we bear witness to ours, declaring how profoundly we have been moved by the perfectly transparent soundness of the views declared in that letter. For if, when you sent a very short letter on the same subject to the most blessed aged Aurelius, by the acolyte Leo, we transcribed it with joyful alacrity, and read it with enthusiastic interest to all who were within our reach, as an exposition of your sentiments, both in regard to that most fatal dogma [of Pelagius], and in regard to the grace of God freely given by Him to small and great, to which that dogma is diametrically opposed; how great, think you, is the joy with which we have read this more extended statement in your writing, how great the zeal with which we take care that it be read by all to whom we have been able already or may yet be able to make it known! For what could be read or heard with greater satisfaction than so clear a defence of the grace of God against its enemies, from the mouth of one who was before this proudly claimed by these enemies as a mighty supporter of their cause?[1] Or is there anything for which we ought to give more abundant thanksgivings to God, than that His grace is so ably defended by those to whom it is given, against those to whom it is not given, or by whom, when given, it is not accepted, because in the secret and just judgment of God the disposition to accept it is not given to them?

2. Wherefore, my venerable lord, and holy brother worthy of being received in the love of Christ, although you render a most excellent service when you thus write on this subject to

[1] Sixtus had been not without reason reckoned as a sympathiser with Pelagius, until their views were finally condemned in this year 418 by Zosimus.

brethren before whom the adversaries are wont to boast themselves of your being their friend, nevertheless, there remains upon you the yet greater duty of seeing not only that those be punished with wholesome severity who dare to prate more openly their declaration of that error, most dangerously hostile to the Christian name, but also that with pastoral vigilance, on behalf of the weaker and simpler sheep of the Lord, most strenuous precautions be used against those who more covertly, indeed, and timidly, but perseveringly, and in whispers, as it were, teach this error, "creeping into houses," as the apostle says, and doing with practised impiety all those other things which are mentioned immediately afterwards in that passage.[1] Nor ought those to be overlooked who under the restraint of fear hide their sentiments under the most profound silence, yet have not ceased to cherish the same perverse opinions as before. For some of their party might be known to you before that pestilence was denounced by the most explicit condemnation of the apostolic see, whom you perceive to have now become suddenly silent; nor can it be ascertained whether they have been really cured of it, otherwise than through their not only forbearing from the utterance of these false dogmas, but also defending the truths which are opposed to their former errors with the same zeal as they used to show on the other side. These are, however, to be more gently dealt with; for what need is there for causing further terror to those whom their silence itself proves to be sufficiently terrified already? At the same time, though they should not be frightened, they should be taught; and in my opinion they may more easily, while their fear of severity assists the teacher of the truth, be so taught that by the Lord's help, after they have learned to understand and love His grace, they may speak out as antagonists of the error which meanwhile they dare not confess.

[1] 2 Tim. iii. 6.

LETTER CXCII.

(A.D. 418.)

TO MY VENERABLE LORD AND HIGHLY ESTEEMED AND HOLY BROTHER, CÆLESTINE,[1] AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. I WAS at a considerable distance from home when the letter of your Holiness addressed to me at Hippo arrived by the hands of the clerk Projectus. When I had returned home, and, having read your letter, felt myself to be owing you a reply, I was still waiting for some means of communicating with you, when, lo! a most desirable opportunity presented itself in the departure of our very dear brother the acolyte Albinus, who leaves us immediately. Rejoicing, therefore, in your health, which is most earnestly desired by me, I return to your Holiness the salutation which I was owing. But I always owe you love, the only debt which, even when it has been paid, holds him who has paid it a debtor still. For it is given when it is paid, but it is owing even after it has been given, for there is no time at which it ceases to be due. Nor when it is given is it lost, but it is rather multiplied by giving it; for in possessing it, not in parting with it, it is given. And since it cannot be given unless it is possessed, so neither can it be possessed unless it is given; nay, at the very time when it is given by a man it increases in that man, and, according to the number of persons to whom it is given, the amount of it which is gained becomes greater. Moreover, how can that be denied to friends which is due even to enemies? To enemies, however, this debt is paid with caution, whereas to friends it is repaid with confidence. Nevertheless, it uses every effort to secure that it receives back what it gives, even in the case of those to whom it renders good for evil. For we wish to have as a friend the man whom, as an enemy, we truly love, for we do not sincerely love him unless we wish

[1] Cælestine, who was at the date of this letter a deacon in Rome, was raised in 423 to succeed Boniface as Bishop of Rome; he stands forty-second in the list of the Popes. Letter CCIX. is addressed to him.

him to be good, which he cannot be until he be delivered from the sin of cherished enmities.

2. Love, therefore, is not paid away in the same manner as money; for, whereas money is diminished, love is increased by paying it away. They differ also in this,—that we give evidence of greater goodwill to the man to whom we may have given money if we do not seek to have it returned; but no one can be a true donor of love unless he lovingly insist on its repayment. For money, when it is received, accrues to him to whom it is given, but forsakes him by whom it is given; love, on the contrary, even when it is not repaid, nevertheless increases with the man who insists on its repayment by the person whom he loves; and not only so, but the person by whom it is returned to him does not begin to possess it till he pays it back again.

Wherefore, my lord and brother, I willingly give to you, and joyfully receive from you, the love which we owe to each other. The love which I receive I still claim, and the love which I give I still owe. For we ought to obey with docility the precept of the One Master, whose disciples we both profess to be, when He says to us by His apostle: "Owe no man anything, but to love one another."[1]

LETTER CXCV.

(A.D. 418.)

TO HIS HOLY LORD AND MOST BLESSED FATHER,[2] AUGUSTINE, JEROME SENDS GREETING.

At all times I have esteemed your Blessedness with becoming reverence and honour, and have loved the Lord and Saviour dwelling in you. But now we add, if possible, something to that which has already reached a climax, and we heap up what was already full, so that we do not suffer a single hour to pass without the mention of your name, because you have, with the ardour of unshaken faith, stood your ground against opposing storms, and preferred, so far as this was in your power, to be delivered from Sodom, though you should

[1] Rom. xiii. 8. [2] Papa.

come forth alone, rather than linger behind with those who are doomed to perish. Your wisdom apprehends what I mean to say. Go on and prosper! You are renowned throughout the whole world; Catholics revere and look up to you as the restorer of the ancient faith, and—which is a token of yet more illustrious glory—all heretics abhor you. They persecute me also with equal hatred, seeking by imprecation to take away the life which they cannot reach with the sword. May the mercy of Christ the Lord preserve you in safety and mindful of me, my venerable lord and most blessed father.[1]

LETTER CCI.

(A.D. 419.)

THE EMPERORS HONORIUS AUGUSTUS AND THEODOSIUS AUGUSTUS TO BISHOP AURELIUS SEND GREETING.

1. It had been indeed long ago decreed that Pelagius and Celestius, the authors of an execrable heresy, should, as pestilent corrupters of the Catholic truth, be expelled from the city of Rome, lest they should, by their baneful influence, pervert the minds of the ignorant. In this our clemency followed up the judgment of your Holiness, according to which it is beyond all question that they were unanimously condemned after an impartial examination of their opinions. Their obstinate persistence in the offence having, however, made it necessary to issue the decree a second time, we have enacted further by a recent edict, that if any one, knowing that they are concealing themselves in any part of the provinces, shall delay either to drive them out or to inform on them, he, as an accomplice, shall be liable to the punishment prescribed.

2. To secure, however, the combined efforts of the Christian

[1] In two MSS. this letter has, as a postscript, the letter already translated as CXXIII.; see page 123. The reason for that letter being supposed to belong to the year 410 is the interpretation which some put upon one of its obscure sentences as alluding to the fall of Rome in that year. If, however, the sentence in question referred to the ecclesiastical difficulties disturbing Jerusalem and all the East in connection with the Pelagian controversy, there is nothing to forbid the conjecture which its place in the MSS. aforesaid suggests, namely, that it was sent at the same time as this letter, with which in them it stands connected.

zeal of all men for the destruction of this preposterous heresy, it will be proper, most dearly beloved father, that the authority of your Holiness be applied to the correction of certain bishops, who either support the evil reasonings of these men by their silent consent, or abstain from assailing them with open opposition. Let your Reverence, then, by suitable writings, cause all bishops to be admonished (as soon as they shall know, by the order of your Holiness, that this order is laid upon them) that whoever shall, through impious obstinacy, neglect to vindicate the purity of their doctrine by subscribing the condemnation of the persons before mentioned, shall, after being punished by the loss of their episcopal office, be cut off by excommunication and banished for life from their sees. For as, by a sincere confession of the truth, we ourselves, in obedience to the Council of Nice, worship God as the Creator of all things, and as the Fountain of our imperial sovereignty, your Holiness will not suffer the members of this odious sect, inventing, to the injury of religion, notions new and strange, to hide in writings privately circulated an error condemned by public authority. For, most beloved and loving father, the guilt of heresy is in no degree less grievous in those who either by dissimulation lend the error their secret support, or by abstaining from denouncing it extend to it a fatal approbation.

(*In another hand.*) May the Divinity preserve you in safety for many years!

Given at Ravenna, on the 9th day of June, in the Consulship of Monaxius and Plinta.

A letter, in the same terms, was also sent to the holy Bishop Augustine.

LETTER CCII.

(A.D. 419.)

TO THE BISHOPS ALYPIUS AND AUGUSTINE, MY LORDS TRULY HOLY, AND DESERVEDLY LOVED AND REVERENCED, JEROME SENDS GREETING IN CHRIST.

CHAP. I. 1. The holy presbyter Innocentius, who is the bearer of this letter, did not last year take with him a letter from me to your Eminences, as he had no expectation of

returning to Africa. We thank God, however, that it so happened, as it afforded you an opportunity of overcoming [evil with good in requiting] our silence by your letter. Every opportunity of writing to you, revered fathers, is most acceptable to me. I call God to witness that, if it were possible, I would take the wings of a dove and fly to be folded in your embrace. Loving you, indeed, as I have always done, from a deep sense of your worth, but now especially because your co-operation and your leadership have succeeded in strangling the heresy of Celestius, a heresy which has so poisoned the hearts of many, that, though they felt they were vanquished and condemned, yet they did not lay aside their venomous sentiments, and, as the only thing that remained in their power, hated us by whom they imagined that they had lost the liberty of teaching heretical doctrines.

CHAP. II. 2. As to your inquiry whether I have written in opposition to the books of Annianus, this pretended deacon[1] of Celedæ, who is amply provided for in order that he may furnish frivolous accounts of the blasphemies of others, know that I received these books, sent in loose sheets by our holy brother, the presbyter Eusebius, not long ago. Since then I have suffered so much through the attacks of disease, and through the falling asleep of your distinguished and holy daughter Eustochium, that I almost thought of passing over these writings with silent contempt. For he flounders from beginning to end in the same mud, and, with the exception of some jingling phrases which are not original, says nothing he had not said before. Nevertheless, I have gained much in the fact, that in attempting to answer my letter he has declared his opinions with less reserve, and has published to all men his blasphemies; for every error which he disowned in the wretched synod of Diospolis he in this treatise openly avows. It is indeed no great thing to answer his superlatively silly puerilities, but if the Lord spare me, and I have a sufficient staff of amanuenses, I will in a few brief lucubrations answer him, not to refute a defunct heresy, but to silence his ignorance and blasphemy by arguments: and this your Holiness could do better than I, as you would relieve me from the necessity

[1] Pseudodiaconus.

of praising my own works in writing to the heretic. Our holy daughters Albina and Melania, and our son Pinianus, salute you cordially. I give to our holy presbyter Innocentius this short letter to convey to you from the holy place Bethlehem. Your niece Paula piteously entreats you to remember her, and salutes you warmly. May the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve you safe and mindful of me, my lords truly holy, and fathers deservedly loved and reverenced.

LETTER CCIII.

(A.D. 420.)

TO MY NOBLE LORD AND MOST EXCELLENT AND LOVING SON, LARGUS, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

I RECEIVED the letter of your Excellency, in which you ask me to write to you. This assuredly you would not have done unless you had esteemed acceptable and pleasant that which you supposed me capable of writing to you. In other words, I assume that, having desired the vanities of this life when you had not tried them, now, after the trial has been made, you despise them, because in them the pleasure is deceitful, the labour fruitless, the anxiety perpetual, the elevation dangerous. Men seek them at first through imprudence, and give them up at last with disappointment and remorse. This is true of all the things which, in the cares of this mortal life, are coveted with more eagerness than wisdom by the uneasy solicitude of the men of the world. But it is wholly otherwise with the hope of the pious: very different is the fruit of their labours, very different the reward of their dangers. Fear and grief, and labour and danger are unavoidable, so long as we live in this world; but the great question is, for what cause, with what expectation, with what aim a man endures these things. When, indeed, I contemplate the lovers of this world, I know not at what time wisdom can most opportunely attempt their moral improvement; for when they have apparent prosperity, they reject disdainfully her salutary admonitions, and regard them as old wives' fables; when, again, they are in adversity, they think rather of escaping merely from present suffering than of obtaining the real remedy by which

they may be made whole, and may arrive at that place where they shall be altogether exempt from suffering. Occasionally, however, some open their ears and hearts to the truth,—rarely in prosperity, more frequently in adversity. These are indeed the few, for such it is predicted that they shall be. Among these I desire you to be, because I love you truly, my noble lord and most excellent and loving son. Let this counsel be my answer to your letter, because though I am unwilling that you should henceforth suffer such things as you have endured, yet I would grieve still more if you were found to have suffered these things without any change for the better in your life.

LETTER CCVIII.

(A.D. 423.)

TO THE LADY FELICIA, HIS DAUGHTER IN THE FAITH, AND WORTHY OF HONOUR AMONG THE MEMBERS OF CHRIST, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. I DO not doubt, when I consider both your faith and the weakness or wickedness of others, that your mind has been disturbed, for even a holy apostle, full of compassionate love, confesses a similar experience, saying, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?"[1] Wherefore, as I myself share your pain, and am solicitous for your welfare in Christ, I have thought it my duty to address this letter, partly consolatory, partly hortatory, to your Holiness, because in the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, in which all His members are one, you are very closely related to us, being loved as an honourable member in that body, and partaking with us of life in His Holy Spirit.

2. I exhort you, therefore, not to be too much troubled by those offences which for this very reason were foretold as destined to come, that when they came we might remember that they had been foretold, and not be greatly disconcerted by them. For the Lord Himself in His gospel foretold them, saying, "Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe unto that man by whom the offence cometh!"[2] These are the men of whom the

[1] 2 Cor. xi. 29. [2] Matt. xviii. 7.

apostle said, "They seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's."[1] There are, therefore, some who hold the honourable office of shepherds in order that they may provide for the flock of Christ; others occupy that position that they may enjoy the temporal honours and secular advantages connected with the office. It must needs happen that these two kinds of pastors, some dying, others succeeding them, should continue in the Catholic Church even to the end of time, and the judgment of the Lord. If, then, in the times of the apostles there were men such that Paul, grieved by their conduct, enumerates among his trials, "perils among false brethren,"[2] and yet he did not haughtily cast them out, but patiently bore with them, how much more must such arise in our times, since the Lord most plainly says concerning this age which is drawing to a close, "that because iniquity shall abound the love of many shall wax cold."[3] The word which follows, however, ought to console and exhort us, for He adds, "He that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved."

3. Moreover, as there are good shepherds and bad shepherds, so also in the flocks there are good and bad. The good are represented by the name of sheep, but the bad are called goats: they feed, nevertheless, side by side in the same pastures, until the Chief Shepherd, who is called the One Shepherd, shall come and separate them one from another according to His promise, "as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats." On us He has laid the duty of gathering the flock; to Himself He has reserved the work of final separation, because it pertains properly to Him who cannot err. For those presumptuous servants, who have lightly ventured to separate before the time which the Lord has reserved in His own hand, have, instead of separating others, only been separated themselves from Catholic unity; for how could those have a clean flock who have by schism become unclean?

4. In order, therefore, that we may remain in the unity of the faith, and not, stumbling at the offences occasioned by the chaff, desert the threshing-floor of the Lord, but rather remain as wheat till the final winnowing,[4] and by the love which imparts stability to us bear with the beaten straw, our great

[1] Phil. ii. 21. [2] 1 Cor. xi. 26. [3] Matt. xxiv. 12, 13. [4] Matt. iii. 12.

Shepherd in the gospel admonishes us concerning the good shepherds, that we should not, on account of their good works, place our hope in them, but glorify our heavenly Father for making them such; and concerning the bad shepherds (whom He designed to point out under the name of Scribes and Pharisees), He reminds us that they teach that which is good, though they do that which is evil.[1]

5. Concerning the good shepherds He thus speaks: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."[2] Concerning the bad shepherds He admonishes the sheep in these words: "The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not."[3] When these are listened to, the sheep of Christ, even through evil teachers, hear His voice, and do not forsake the unity of His flock, because the good which they hear them teach belongs not to the shepherds but to Him, and therefore the sheep are safely fed, since even under bad shepherds they are nourished in the Lord's pastures. They do not, however, imitate the actions of the bad shepherds, because such actions belong not to the world but to the shepherds themselves. In regard, however, to those whom they see to be good shepherds, they not only hear the good things which they teach, but also imitate the good actions which they perform. Of this number was the apostle, who said: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."[4] He was a light kindled by the Eternal Light, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and was placed on a candlestick because He gloried in His cross, concerning which he said: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."[5] Moreover, since he sought not his own things, but the things which are Jesus Christ's, whilst he exhorts to the imitation of his own life those whom he had "begotten through the gospel,"[6] he

[1] Matt. iii. 12. [2] Matt. v. 14, 15, 16. [3] Matt. xxiii. 2, 3.
[4] 1 Cor. xi. 1. [5] Gal. vi. 14. [6] 1 Cor. iv. 15.

yet severely reproved those who, by the names of apostles, introduced schisms, and he chides those who said, "I am of Paul; was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"[1]

6. Hence we understand both that the good shepherds are those who seek not their own, but the things of Jesus Christ, and that the good sheep, though imitating the works of the good shepherds by whose ministry they have been gathered together, do not place their hope in them, but rather in the Lord, by whose blood they are redeemed; so that when they may happen to be placed under bad shepherds, preaching Christ's doctrine and doing their own evil works, they will do what they teach, but will not do what they do, and will not, on account of these sons of wickedness, forsake the pastures of the one true Church. For there are both good and bad in the Catholic Church, which, unlike the Donatist sect, is extended and spread abroad, not in Africa only, but through all nations; as the apostle expresses it, "bringing forth fruit, and increasing in the whole world."[2] But those who are separated from the Church, as long as they are opposed to it cannot be good; although an apparently praiseworthy conversation seems to prove some of them to be good, their separation from the Church itself renders them bad, according to the saying of the Lord: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth."[3]

7. Therefore, my daughter, worthy of all welcome and honour among the members of Christ, I exhort you to hold faithfully that which the Lord has committed to you, and love with all your heart Him and His Church who suffered you not, by joining yourself with the lost, to lose the recompense of your virginity, or perish with them. For if you should depart out of this world separated from the unity of the body of Christ, it will avail you nothing to have preserved inviolate your virginity. But God, who is rich in mercy, has done in regard to you that which is written in the gospel: when the invited guests excused themselves to the master of the feast, he said to the servants, "Go ye, therefore, into the high-

[1] 1 Cor. i. 12, 13.

[2] Col. i. 6. The words "καὶ αὐξανόμενον," here translated by Augustine, are found in some MSS. but omitted in the *Textus Receptus*.

[3] Matt. xii. 30.

ways and hedges, and as many as ye shall find compel them to come in."[1] Although, however, you owe sincerest affection to those good servants of His through whose instrumentality you were compelled to come in, yet it is your duty, nevertheless, to place your hope on Him who prepared the banquet, by whom also you have been persuaded to come to eternal and blessed life. Committing to Him your heart, your vow, and your sacred virginity, and your faith, hope, and charity, you will not be moved by offences, which shall abound even to the end; but, by the unshaken strength of piety, shall be safe and shall triumph in the Lord, continuing in the unity of His body even to the end. Let me know, by your answer, with what sentiments you regard my anxiety for you, to which I have to the best of my ability given expression in this letter. May the grace and mercy of God ever protect you!

LETTER CCIX.

(A.D. 423.)

TO CÆLESTINE,[2] MY LORD MOST BLESSED, AND HOLY FATHER VENERATED WITH ALL DUE AFFECTION, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. First of all I congratulate you that our Lord God has, as we have heard, established you in the illustrious chair which you occupy without any division among His people. In the next place, I lay before your Holiness the state of affairs with us, that not only by your prayers, but with your counsel and aid you may help us. For I write to you at this time under deep affliction, because, while wishing to benefit certain members of Christ in our neighbourhood, I brought on them a great calamity by my want of prudence and caution.

2. Bordering on the district of Hippo, there is a small town,[3] named Fussala: formerly there was no bishop there, but, along with the contiguous district, it was included in the

[1] Matt. xxii. 9; Luke xiv. 23.

[2] The successor of Boniface as Bishop of Rome. See note to Letter CXCII. For a summary of the arguments which may be used on both sides in regard to the genuineness of this letter, which is found in only one MS., see Dupin's remarks upon it in his *Ecclesiastical History*, 5th century.

[3] Castellum.

parish of Hippo. That part of the country had few Catholics; the error of the Donatists held under its miserable influence all the other congregations located in the midst of a large population, so that in the town of Fussala itself there was not one Catholic. In the mercy of God, all these places were brought to attach themselves to the unity of the Church; with how much toil, and how many dangers it would take long to tell,—how the presbyters originally appointed by us to gather these people into the fold were robbed, beaten, maimed, deprived of their eyesight, and even put to death; whose sufferings, however, were not useless and unfruitful, seeing that by them the re-establishment of unity was achieved. But as Fussala is forty miles distant from Hippo, and I saw that in governing its people, and gathering together the remnant, however small, of persons of both sexes, who, not threatening others, but fleeing for their own safety, were scattered here and there, my work would be extended farther than it ought, and that I could not give the attention which I clearly perceived to be necessary, I arranged that a bishop should be ordained and appointed there.

3. With a view to the carrying out of this, I sought for a person who might be suitable to the locality and people, and at the same time acquainted with the Punic language; and I had in my mind a presbyter fitted for the office. Having applied by letter to the holy senior bishop who was then Primate of Numidia, I obtained his consent to come from a great distance to ordain this presbyter. After his coming, when all our minds were intent on an affair of so great consequence, at the last moment, the person whom I believed to be ready to be ordained disappointed us by absolutely refusing to accept the office. Then I myself, who, as the event showed, ought rather to have postponed than precipitated a matter so perilous, being unwilling that the very venerable and holy old man, who had come with so much fatigue to us, should return home without accomplishing the business for which he had journeyed so far, offered to the people, without their seeking him, a young man, Antonius, who was then with me. He had been from childhood brought up in a monastery by us, but, beyond officiating as a reader,

he had no experience of the labours pertaining to the various degrees of rank in the clerical office. The unhappy people, not knowing what was to follow, submissively trusting me, accepted him on my suggestion. What need I say more? The deed was done; he entered on his office as their bishop.

4. What shall I do? I am unwilling to accuse before your venerable Dignity one whom I brought into the fold, and nourished with care; and I am unwilling to forsake those in seeking whose ingathering to the Church I have travailed, amid fears and anxieties; and how to do justice to both I cannot discover. The matter has come to such a painful crisis, that those who, in compliance with my wishes, had, in the belief that they were consulting their own interests, chosen him for their bishop, are now bringing charges against him before me. When the most serious of these, namely, charges of gross immorality, which were brought forward not by those whose bishop he was, but by certain other individuals, were found to be utterly unsupported by evidence, and he seemed to us fully acquitted of the crimes laid most ungenerously to his charge, he was on this account regarded, both by ourselves and by others, with such sympathy that the things complained of by the people of Fussala and the surrounding district,—such as intolerable tyranny and spoliation, and extortion, and oppression of various kinds,—by no means seemed so grievous that for one, or for all of them taken together, we should deem it necessary to deprive him of the office of bishop; it seemed to us enough to insist that he should restore what might be proved to have been taken away unjustly.

5. In fine, we so mixed clemency with severity in our sentence, that while reserving to him his office of bishop, we did not leave altogether unpunished offences which behoved neither to be repeated again by himself, nor held forth to the imitation of others. We therefore, in correcting him, reserved to the young man the rank of his office unimpaired, but at the same time, as a punishment, we took away his power, appointing that he should not any longer rule over those with whom he had dealt in such a manner, that with just resentment they could not submit to his authority, and might perhaps manifest their impatient indignation by breaking

forth into some deeds of violence fraught with danger both to themselves and to him. That this was the state of feeling evidently appeared when the bishops dealt with them concerning Antonius, although at present that conspicuous man Celer, of whose powerful interference against him he complained, possesses no power, either in Africa or elsewhere.

6. But why should I detain you with further particulars? I beseech you to assist us in this laborious matter, blessed lord and holy father, venerated for your piety, and revered with due affection; and command all the documents which have been forwarded to be read aloud to you. Observe in what manner Antonius discharged his duties as bishop; how, when debarred from communion until full restitution should be made to the men of Fussala, he submitted to our sentence, and has now set apart a sum out of which to pay what may after inquiry be deemed just for compensation, in order that the privilege of communion might be restored to him; with what crafty reasoning he prevailed on our aged primate, a most venerable man, to believe all his statements, and to recommend him as altogether blameless to the venerable Pope Boniface. But why should I rehearse all the rest, seeing that the venerable old man aforesaid must have reported the entire matter to your Holiness?

7. In the numerous minutes of procedure in which our judgment regarding him is recorded, I should have feared that we might appear to you to have passed a sentence less severe than we ought to have done, did I not know that you are so prone to mercy that you will deem it your duty to spare not us only, because we spared him, but also the man himself. But what we did, whether in kindness or laxity, he attempts to turn to account, and use as a legal objection to our sentence. He boldly protests: "Either I ought to sit in my own episcopal chair, or ought not to be a bishop at all," as if he were now sitting in any seat but his own. For, on this very account, those places were set apart and assigned to him in which he had previously been bishop, that he might not be said to be unlawfully translated to another see, contrary to the statutes of the Fathers;[1] or is it

[1] Translations from one see to another, now permitted, had been forbidden by the Councils of Nice, Sardis, and Antioch.

to be maintained that one ought to be so rigid an advocate, either for severity or for lenity, as to insist, either that no punishment be inflicted on those who seem not to deserve deposition from the office of bishop, or that the sentence of deposition be pronounced on all who seem to deserve any punishment?

8. There are cases on record, in which the Apostolic See, either pronouncing judgment or confirming the judgment of others, sanctioned decisions by which persons, for certain offences, were neither deposed from their episcopal office nor left altogether unpunished. I shall not bring forward those which occurred at a period very remote from our own time; I shall mention recent instances. Let Priscus, a bishop of the province of Cæsarea, protest boldly: "Either the office of primate should be open to me, as to other bishops, or I ought not to remain a bishop." Let Victor, another bishop of the same province, with whom, when involved in the same sentence as Priscus, no bishop beyond his own diocese holds communion, let him, I say, protest with similar confidence: "Either I ought to have communion everywhere, or I ought not to have it in my own district." Let Laurentius, a third bishop of the same province, speak, and in the precise words of this man he may exclaim: "Either I ought to sit in the chair to which I have been ordained, or I ought not to be a bishop." But who can find fault with these judgments, except one who does not consider that, neither on the one hand ought all offences to be left unpunished, nor on the other ought all to be punished in one way?

9. Since, then, the most blessed Pope Boniface, speaking of Bishop Antonius, has in his epistle, with the vigilant caution becoming a pastor, inserted in his judgment the additional clause, "if he has faithfully narrated the facts of the case to us," receive now the facts of the case, which in his statement to you he passed over in silence, and also the transactions which took place after the letter of that man of blessed memory had been read in Africa, and in the mercy of Christ extend your aid to men imploring it more earnestly than he does from whose turbulence they desire to be freed. For either from himself, or at least from very frequent rumours, threats are held out that the courts of justiciary, and the public

authorities, and the violence of the military, are to carry into force the decision of the Apostolic See; the effect of which is that these unhappy men, being now Catholic Christians, dread greater evils from a Catholic bishop than those which, when they were heretics, they dreaded from the laws of Catholic emperors. Do not permit these things to be done, I implore you, by the blood of Christ, by the memory of the Apostle Peter, who has warned those placed over Christian people against violently "lording it over their brethren."[1] I commend to the gracious love of your Holiness the Catholics of Fussala, my children in Christ, and also Bishop Antonius, my son in Christ, for I love both, and I commend both to you. I do not blame the people of Fussala for bringing to your ears their just complaint against me for imposing on them a man whom I had not proved, and who was in age at least not yet established, by whom they have been so afflicted; nor do I wish any wrong done to Antonius, whose evil covetousness I oppose with a determination proportioned to my sincere affection for him. Let your compassion be extended to both,—to them, so that they may not suffer evil; to him, so that he may not do evil; to them, so that they may not hate the Catholic Church, if they find no aid in defence against a Catholic bishop extended to them by Catholic bishops, and especially by the Apostolic See itself; to him, on the other hand, so that he may not involve himself in such grievous wickedness as to alienate from Christ those whom against their will he endeavours to make his own.

10. As for myself, I must acknowledge to your Holiness, that in the danger which threatens both, I am so racked with anxiety and grief that I think of retiring from the responsibilities of the episcopal office, and abandoning myself to demonstrations of sorrow corresponding to the greatness of my error, if I shall see (through the conduct of him in favour of whose election to the bishopric I imprudently gave my vote) the Church of God laid waste, and (which may God forbid) even perish, involving in its destruction the man by whom it was laid waste. Recollecting what the apostle says: "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."[2] I will

[1] 1 Pet. v. 3. [2] 1 Cor. xi. 31.

judge myself, that He may spare me who is hereafter to judge the quick and the dead. If, however, you succeed in restoring the members of Christ in that district from their deadly fear and grief, and in comforting my old age by the administration of justice tempered with mercy, He who brings deliverance to us through you in this tribulation, and who has established you in the seat which you occupy, shall recompense unto you good for good, both in this life and in that which is to come.

LETTER CCX.

(A.D. 423.)

TO THE MOST BELOVED AND MOST HOLY MOTHER FELICITAS,[1] AND BROTHER RUSTICUS, AND TO THE SISTERS WHO ARE WITH THEM, AUGUSTINE AND THOSE WHO ARE WITH HIM SEND GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. Good is the Lord, and to every place extends His mercy, which comforts us by your love to us in Him. How much He loves those who believe and hope in Him, and who both love Him and love one another, and what blessings He keeps in store for them hereafter, He proves most remarkably in this, that on the unbelieving, the abandoned, and the perverse, whom He threatens with eternal fire if they persevere in their evil disposition to the end, He does in this life bestow so many benefits, making "His sun to rise on the evil and on the good," "on the just and on the unjust,"[2] words in which, for the sake of brevity, some instances are mentioned that many more may be suggested to reflection; for who can reckon up how many gracious benefits the wicked receive in this life from Him whom they despise? Amongst these, this is one of great value, that by the experience of the occasional afflictions, which like a good physician He mingles with the pleasures of this life, He admonishes them, if only they will give heed, to flee from the wrath to come, and while they are in the way, that is, in this life, to agree with the word of God, which they have

[1] The prioress of the nunnery at Hippo, appointed to that office after the death of the sister of Augustine.

[2] Matt. v. 45.

made an adversary to themselves by their wicked lives. What, then, is not bestowed in mercy on men by the Lord God, since even affliction sent by Him is a blessing? For prosperity is a gift of God when He comforts, adversity a gift of God when He warns; and if He bestows these things, as I have said, even on the wicked, what does He prepare for those who bear with one another? Into this number you rejoice that through His grace you have been gathered, "forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."[1] For there shall not be awanting occasion for your bearing one with another till God shall have so purified you, that, death being "swallowed up in victory,"[2] "God shall be all in all."[3]

2. We ought never, indeed, to take pleasure in quarrels; but however averse we may be to them, they occasionally either arise from love, or put it to the test. For how difficult is it to find any one willing to be reproved; and where is the wise man of whom it is said, "Rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee"?[4] But are we on that account not to reprove and find fault with a brother, to prevent him from going down through false security to death? For it is a common and frequent experience, that when a brother is found fault with he is mortified at the time, and resists and contradicts his friend, but afterwards reconsiders the matter in silence alone with God, where he is not afraid of giving offence to men by submitting to correction, but is afraid of offending God by refusing to be reformed, and thenceforward refrains from doing that for which he has been justly reproved; and in proportion as he hates his sin, he loves the brother whom he feels to have been the enemy of his sin. But if he belong to the number of those of whom it is said, "Reprove not a scorner lest he hate thee,"[5] the quarrel does not arise from love on the part of the reproved, but it exercises and tests the love of the reprover; for he does not return hatred for hatred, but the love which constrains him to find fault endures unmoved, even when he who is found fault with requites it with hatred. But if the reprover renders evil for evil to the man who takes offence at

[1] Eph. iv. 2, 3. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 24. [3] 1 Cor. xv. 28.
[4] Prov. ix. 8. [5] Prov. ix. 8.

being reproved, he was not worthy to reprove another, but evidently deserves to be himself reproved. Act upon these principles, so that either quarrels may not arise, or, if they do arise, may quickly terminate in peace. Be more earnest to dwell in concord than to vanquish each other in controversy. For as vinegar corrodes a vessel if it remain long in it, so anger corrodes the heart if it is cherished till the morrow. These things, therefore, observe, and the God of peace shall be with you. Pray also unitedly for us, that we may cheerfully practise the good advices which we give to you.

LETTER CCXI.

(A.D. 423.)

IN THIS LETTER AUGUSTINE REBUKES THE NUNS OF THE MONASTERY IN WHICH HIS SISTER HAD BEEN PRIORESS, FOR CERTAIN TURBULENT MANIFESTATIONS OF DISSATISFACTION WITH HER SUCCESSOR, AND LAYS DOWN GENERAL RULES FOR THEIR GUIDANCE.[1]

1. As severity is ready to punish the faults which it may discover, so charity is reluctant to discover the faults which it must punish. This was the reason of my not acceding to your request for a visit from me, at a time when, if I had come, I must have come not to rejoice in your harmony, but to add more vehemence to your strife. For how could I have treated your behaviour with indifference, or have allowed it to pass unpunished, if so great a tumult had arisen among you in my presence, as that which, when I was absent, assailed my ears with the din of your voices, although my eyes did not witness your disorder? For perhaps your rising against authority would have been even more violent in my presence, since I must have refused the concessions which you demanded,—concessions involving, to your own disadvantage, some most dangerous precedents, subversive of sound

[1] This letter is of historical value, as embodying the rules of nunneries belonging to the Augustinian orders. In the end of the first volume of the Benedictine edition of his writings, this rule of monastic life is given, adapted by some later writer to convents of monks.

discipline; and I must thus have found you such as I did not desire, and must have myself been found by you such as you did not desire.

2. The apostle, writing to the Corinthians, says: "Moreover, I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet to Corinth. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy."[1] I also say the same to you; to spare you I have not come to you. I have also spared myself, that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow, and have chosen not to see you face to face, but to pour out my heart to God on your behalf, and to plead the cause of your great danger not in words before you, but in tears before God; entreating Him that He may not turn into grief the joy wherewith I am wont to rejoice in you, and that amid the great offences with which this world everywhere abounds, I may be comforted at times by thinking of your number, your pure affection, your holy conversation, and the abundant grace of God which is given to you, so that you not only have renounced matrimony, but have chosen to dwell with one accord in fellowship under the same roof, that you may have one soul and one heart in God.

3. When I reflect on these good things, these gifts of God in you, my heart, amid the many storms by which it is agitated through evils elsewhere, is wont to find perfect rest. "Ye did run well; who did hinder you, that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of Him that calleth you."[2] "A little leaven"—[3] I am unwilling to complete the sentence, for I rather desire, entreat, and exhort that the leaven itself be transformed into something better, lest it change the whole lump for the worse, as it has already almost done. If, therefore, you have begun to put forth again the buddings of a sound discernment as to your duty, pray that you enter not into temptation, nor fall again into strifes, emulations, animosities, divisions, evil speaking, seditions, whisperings. For we have not laboured as we have done in planting and watering the garden of the Lord among you, that we may reap these thorns from you. If, however, your weakness be still disturbed by turbulence, pray that you

[1] 2 Cor. i. 23. [2] Gal. v. 7, 8. [3] 1 Cor. v. 6.

may be delivered from this temptation. As for the troublers of your peace, if such there be still among you, they shall, unless they amend their conduct, bear their judgment, whoever they be.

4. Consider how evil a thing it is, that at the very time when we rejoice in the return of the Donatists to our unity, we have to lament internal discord within our monastery. Be stedfast in observing your good vows, and you will not desire to change for another the prioress whose care of the monastery has been for so many years unwearied, under whom also you have both increased in numbers and advanced in age, and who has given you the place in her heart which a mother gives to her own children. All of you when you came to the monastery found her there, either discharging satisfactorily the duties of assistant to the late holy prioress, my sister, or, after her own accession to that office, giving you a welcome to the sisterhood. Under her you spent your noviciate, under her you took the veil, under her your number has been multiplied, and yet you are riotously demanding that she should be replaced by another, whereas, if the proposal to put another in her place had come from us, it would have been seemly for you to have mourned over such a proposal. For she is one whom you know well; to her you came at first, and under her you have for so many years advanced in age and in numbers. No official previously unknown to you has been appointed, excepting the prior; if it be on his account that you seek a change, and if through aversion to him you thus rebel against your mother, why do you not rather petition for his removal? If, however, you recoil from this suggestion, for I know how you reverence and love him in Christ, why do you not all the more for his sake reverence and love her? For the first measures of the recently appointed prior in presiding over you are so hindered by your disorderly behaviour, that he is himself disposed to leave you, rather than be subjected on your account to the dishonour and odium which must arise from the report going abroad, that you would not have sought another prioress unless you had begun to have him as your prior. May God therefore calm and compose your minds:

let not the work of the devil prevail in you, but may the peace of Christ gain the victory in your hearts; and do not rush headlong to death, either through vexation of spirit, because what you desire is refused, or through shame, because of having desired what you ought not to have desired, but rather by repentance resume the conscientious discharge of duty; and imitate not the repentance of Judas the traitor, but the tears of Peter the shepherd.

5. The rules which we lay down to be observed by you as persons settled in a monastery are these :—

First of all, in order to fulfil the end for which you have been gathered into one community, dwell in the house with oneness of spirit, and let your hearts and minds be one in God. Also call not anything the property of any one, but let all things be common property, and let distribution of food and raiment be made to each of you by the prioress,—not equally to all, because you are not all equally strong, but to every one according to her need. For you read in the Acts of the Apostles: "They had all things common: and distribution was made to every man according as he had need."[1] Let those who had any worldly goods when they entered the monastery cheerfully desire that these become common property. Let those who had no worldly goods not ask within the monastery for luxuries which they could not have while they were outside of its walls; nevertheless, let the comforts which the infirmity of any of them may require be given to such, though their poverty before coming in to the monastery may have been such that they could not have procured for themselves the bare necessaries of life; and let them in such case be careful not to reckon it the chief happiness of their present lot that they have found within the monastery food and raiment, such as was elsewhere beyond their reach.

6. Let them, moreover, not hold their heads high because they are associated on terms of equality with persons whom they durst not have approached in the outer world; but let them rather lift their hearts on high, and not seek after earthly possessions, lest, if the rich be made lowly but the poor puffed up with vanity in our monasteries, these institu-

[1] Acts iv. 32, 35.

tions become useful only to the rich, and hurtful to the poor. On the other hand, however, let not those who seemed to hold some position in the world regard with contempt their sisters, who in coming into this sacred fellowship have left a condition of poverty; let them be careful to glory rather in the fellowship of their poor sisters, than in the rank of their wealthy parents. And let them not lift themselves up above the rest because of their having, perchance, contributed something from their own resources to the maintenance of the community, lest they find in their riches more occasion for pride, because they divide them with others in a monastery, than they might have found if they had spent them in their own enjoyment in the world. For every other kind of sin finds scope in evil works, so that by it they are done, but pride lurks even in good works, so that by it they are undone; and what avails it to lavish money on the poor, and become poor oneself, if the unhappy soul is rendered more proud by despising riches than it had been by possessing them? Live, then, all of you, in unanimity and concord, and in each other give honour to that God whose temples you have been made.

7. Be regular (*instate*) in prayers at the appointed hours and times. In the oratory let no one do anything else than the duty for which the place was made, and from which it has received its name; so that if any of you, having leisure, wish to pray at other hours than those appointed, they may not be hindered by others using the place for any other purpose. In the psalms and hymns used in your prayers to God, let that be pondered in the heart which is uttered by the voice; chant nothing but what you find prescribed to be chanted; whatever is not so prescribed is not to be chanted.

8. Keep the flesh under by fastings and by abstinence from meat and drink, so far as health allows. When any one is not able to fast, let her not, unless she be ill, take any nourishment except at the customary hour of repast. From the time of your coming to table until you rise from it, listen without noise and wrangling to whatever may be in course read to you; let not your mouths alone be exercised in receiving food, let your ears be also occupied in receiving the word of God.

9. If those who are weak in consequence of their early train-

ing are treated somewhat differently in regard to food, this ought not to be vexatious or seem unjust to others whom a different training has made more robust. And let them not esteem these weaker ones more favoured than themselves, because they receive a fare somewhat less frugal than their own, but rather congratulate themselves on enjoying a vigour of constitution which the others do not possess. And if to those who have entered the monastery after a more delicate upbringing at home, there be given any food, clothing, couch, or covering which to others who are stronger, and in that respect more favourably circumstanced, is not given, the sisters to whom these indulgences are not given ought to consider how great a descent the others have made from their style of living in the world to that which they now have, although they may not have been able to come altogether down to the severe simplicity of others who have a more hardy constitution. And when those who were originally more wealthy see others receiving—not as mark of higher honour, but out of consideration for infirmity—more largely than they do themselves, they ought not to be disturbed by fear of any such detestable perversion of monastic discipline as this, that the poor are to be trained to luxury in a monastery in which the wealthy are, so far as they can bear it, trained to hardships. For, of course, as those who are ill must take less food, otherwise they would increase their disease, so after illness, those who are convalescent must, in order to their more rapid recovery, be so nursed—even though they may have come from the lowest poverty to the monastery—as if their recent illness had conferred on them the same claim for special treatment as their former style of living confers upon those who, before entering the monastery, were rich. So soon, however, as they regain their wonted health, let them return to their own happier mode of living, which, as involving fewer wants, is more suitable for those who are servants of God; and let not inclination detain them when they are strong in that amount of ease to which necessity had raised them when they were weak. Let those regard themselves as truly richer who are endowed with greater strength to bear hardships. For it is better to have fewer wants than to have larger resources.

10. Let your apparel be in no wise conspicuous; and aspire

to please others by your behaviour rather than by your attire. Let your head-dresses not be so thin as to let the nets below them be seen. Let your hair be worn wholly covered, and let it neither be carelessly dishevelled nor too scrupulously arranged when you go beyond the monastery. When you go anywhere, walk together; when you come to the place to which you were going, stand together. In walking, in standing, in deportment, and in all your movements let nothing be done which might attract the improper desires of any one, but rather let all be in keeping with your sacred character. Though a passing glance be directed towards any man, let your eyes look fixedly at none; for when you are walking you are not forbidden to see men, but you must neither let your desires go out to them, nor wish to be the objects of desire on their part. For it is not only by touch that a woman awakens in any man or cherishes towards him such desire, this may be done by inward feelings and by looks. And say not that you have chaste minds though you may have wanton eyes, for a wanton eye is the index of a wanton heart. And when wanton hearts exchange signals with each other in looks, though the tongue is silent, and are, by the force of sensual passion, pleased by the reciprocation of inflamed desire, their purity of character is gone, though their bodies are not defiled by any act of uncleanness. Nor let her who fixes her eyes upon one of the other sex, and takes pleasure in his eye being fixed on her, imagine that the act is not observed by others; she is seen assuredly by those by whom she supposes herself not to be remarked. But even though she should elude notice, and be seen by no human eye, what shall she do with that Witness above us from whom nothing can be concealed? Is He to be regarded as not seeing because His eye rests on all things with a long-suffering proportioned to His wisdom? Let every holy woman guard herself from desiring sinfully to please man by cherishing a fear of displeasing God; let her check the desire of sinfully looking upon man by remembering that God's eye is looking upon all things. For in this very matter we are exhorted to cherish fear of God by the words of Scripture:—"He that looks with a fixed eye is an abomination to the Lord."[1] When, therefore, you are together

[1] Prov. xxvii. 20, LXX. βδέλυγμα κυρίῳ στηρίζων ὀφθαλμόν.

in the church, or in any other place where men also are present, guard your chastity by watching over one another, and God, who dwelleth in you, will thus guard you by means of yourselves.

11. And if you perceive in any one of your number this frowardness of eye, warn her at once, so that the evil which has begun may not go on, but be checked immediately. But if, after this admonition, you see her repeat the offence, or do the same thing on any other subsequent day, whoever may have had the opportunity of seeing this must now report her as one who has been wounded and requires to be healed, but not without pointing her out to another, and perhaps a third sister, so that she may be convicted by the testimony of two or three witnesses,[1] and may be reprimanded with necessary severity. And do not think that in thus informing upon one another you are guilty of malevolence. For the truth rather is, that you are not guiltless if by keeping silence you allow sisters to perish, whom you may correct by giving information of their faults. For if your sister had a wound on her person which she wished to conceal through fear of the surgeon's lance, would it not be cruel if you kept silence about it, and true compassion if you made it known? How much more, then, are you bound to make known her sin, that she may not suffer more fatally from a neglected spiritual wound. But before she is pointed out to others as witnesses by whom she may be convicted if she deny the charge, the offender ought to be brought before the prioress, if after admonition she has refused to be corrected, so that by her being in this way more privately rebuked, the fault which she has committed may not become known to all the others. If, however, she then deny the charge, then others must be employed to observe her conduct after the denial, so that now before the whole sisterhood she may not be accused by one witness, but convicted by two or three. When convicted of the fault, it is her duty to submit to the corrective discipline which may be appointed by the prioress or the prior. If she refuse to submit to this, and does not go away from you of her own accord, let her be expelled from your society. For this is not done cruelly but mercifully, to protect very many

[1] Matt. xviii. 16.

from perishing through infection of the plague with which one has been stricken. Moreover, what I have now said in regard to abstaining from wanton looks should be carefully observed, with due love for the persons and hatred of the sin, in observing, forbidding, reporting, proving, and punishing of all other faults. But if any one among you has gone on into so great sin as to receive secretly from any man letters or gifts of any description, let her be pardoned and prayed for if she confess this of her own accord. If, however, she is found out and is convicted of such conduct, let her be more severely punished, according to the sentence of the prioress, or of the prior, or even of the bishop.

12. Keep your clothes in one place, under the care of one or two, or as many as may be required to shake them so as to keep them from being injured by moths; and as your food is supplied from one storeroom, let your clothes be provided from one wardrobe. And whatever may be brought out to you as wearing apparel suitable for the season, regard it, if possible, as a matter of no importance whether each of you receives the very same article of clothing which she had formerly laid aside, or one receive what another formerly wore, provided only that what is necessary be denied to no one. But if contentions and murmurings are occasioned among you by this, and some one of you complains that she has received some article of dress inferior to that which she formerly wore, and thinks it beneath her to be so clothed as her other sister was, by this prove your own selves, and judge how far deficient you must be in the inner holy dress of the heart, when you quarrel with each other about the clothing of the body. Nevertheless, if your infirmity is indulged by the concession that you are to receive again the identical article which you had laid aside, let whatever you put past be, nevertheless, kept in one place, and in charge of the ordinary keepers of the wardrobe; it being, of course, understood that no one is to work in making any article for clothing or for the couch, or any girdle, veil, or head-dress, for her own private comfort, but that all your works be done for the common good of all, with greater zeal and more cheerful perseverance than if you were each working for your individual interest. For the love concerning which it is

written, "Charity seeketh not her own,"[1] is to be understood as that which prefers the common good to personal advantage, not personal advantage to the common good. Therefore the more fully that you give to the common good a preference above your personal and private interests, the more fully will you be sensible of progress in securing that, in regard to all those things which supply wants destined soon to pass away, the charity which abides may hold a conspicuous and influential place. An obvious corollary from these rules is, that when persons of either sex bring to their own daughters in the monastery, or to inmates belonging to them by any other relationship, presents of clothing or of other articles which are to be regarded as necessary, such gifts are not to be received privately, but must be under the control of the prioress, that, being added to the common stock, they may be placed at the service of any inmate to whom they may be necessary. If any one conceal any gift bestowed on her, let sentence be passed on her as guilty of theft.

13. Let your clothes be washed, whether by yourselves or by washerwomen, at such intervals as are approved by the prioress, lest the indulgence of undue solicitude about spotless raiment produce inward stains upon your souls. Let the washing of the body and the use of baths be not constant, but at the usual interval assigned to it, *i.e.* once in a month. In the case, however, of illness rendering necessary the washing of the person, let it not be unduly delayed; let it be done on the physician's recommendation without complaint; and even though the patient be reluctant, she must do at the order of the prioress what health demands. If, however, a patient desires the bath, and it happen to be not for her good, her desire must not be yielded to, for sometimes it is supposed to be beneficial because it gives pleasure, although in reality it may be doing harm. Finally, if a handmaid of God suffers from any hidden pain of body, let her statement as to her suffering be believed without hesitation; but if there be any uncertainty whether that which she finds agreeable be really of use in curing her pain, let the physician be consulted. To the baths, or to any place whither it may be necessary to go,

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 5.

let no fewer than three go at any time. Moreover, the sister requiring to go anywhere is not to go with those whom she may choose herself, but with those whom the prioress may order. The care of the sick, and of those who require attention as convalescents, and of those who, without any feverish symptoms, are labouring under debility, ought to be committed to some one of your number, who shall procure for them from the storeroom what she shall see to be necessary for each. Moreover, let those who have charge, whether in the storeroom, or in the wardrobe, or in the library, render service to their sisters without murmuring. Let manuscripts be applied for at a fixed hour every day, and let none who ask them at other hours receive them. But at whatever time clothes and shoes may be required by one in need of these, let not those in charge of this department delay supplying the want.

14. Quarrels should be unknown among you, or at least, if they arise, they should as quickly as possible be ended, lest anger grow into hatred, and convert "a mote into a beam,"[1] and make the soul chargeable with murder. For the saying of Scripture: "He that hateth his brother is a murderer,"[2] does not concern men only, but women also are bound by this law through its being enjoined on the other sex, which was prior in the order of creation. Let her, whoever she be, that shall have injured another by taunt or abusive language, or false accusation, remember to remedy the wrong by apology as promptly as possible, and let her who was injured grant forgiveness without further disputation. If the injury has been mutual, the duty of both parties will be mutual forgiveness, because of your prayers, which, as they are more frequent, ought to be all the more sacred in your esteem. But the sister who is prompt in asking another whom she confesses that she has wronged to grant her forgiveness is, though she may be more frequently betrayed by a hasty temper, better than another who, though less irascible, is with more difficulty persuaded to ask forgiveness. Let not her who refuses to forgive her sister expect to receive answers to prayer: as for any sister who never will ask forgiveness, or does not do it from the heart, it is no advantage to such an one to be in a

[1] Matt. vii. 3. [2] 1 John iii. 15.

monastery, even though, perchance, she may not be expelled. Wherefore abstain from hard words; but if they have escaped your lips, be not slow to bring words of healing from the same lips by which the wounds were inflicted. When, however, the necessity of discipline compels you to use hard words in restraining the younger inmates, even though you feel that in these you have gone too far, it is not imperative on you to ask their forgiveness, lest while undue humility is observed by you towards those who ought to be subject to you, the authority necessary for governing them be impaired; but pardon must nevertheless be sought from the Lord of all, who knows with what goodwill you love even those whom you reprove it may be with undue severity. The love which you bear to each other must be not carnal, but spiritual: for those things which are practised by immodest women in shameful frolic and sporting with one another ought not even to be done by those of your sex who are married, or are intending to marry, and much more ought not to be done by widows or chaste virgins dedicated to be handmaids of Christ by a holy vow.

15. Obey the prioress as a mother, giving her all due honour, that God may not be offended by your forgetting what you owe to her: still more is it incumbent on you to obey the presbyter who has charge of you all. To the prioress most specially belongs the responsibility of seeing that all these rules be observed, and that if any rule has been neglected, the offence be not passed over, but carefully corrected and punished; it being, of course, open to her to refer to the presbyter any matter that goes beyond her province or power. But let her count herself happy not in exercising the power which rules, but in practising the love which serves. In honour in the sight of men let her be raised above you, but in fear in the sight of God let her be as it were beneath your feet. Let her show herself before all a "pattern of good works."[1] Let her "warn the unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all."[2] Let her cheerfully observe and cautiously impose rules. And, though both are necessary, let her be more anxious to be loved than to be feared by you; always reflecting that for you she must

[1] Titus ii. 7. [2] 1 Thess. v. 14.

give account to God. For this reason yield obedience to her out of compassion not for yourselves only but also for her, because, as she occupies a higher position among you, her danger is proportionately greater than your own.

16. The Lord grant that you may yield loving submission to all these rules, as persons enamoured of spiritual beauty, and diffusing a sweet savour of Christ by means of a good conversation, not as bondwomen under the law, but as established in freedom under grace. That you may, however, examine yourselves by this treatise as by a mirror, and may not through forgetfulness neglect anything, let it be read over by you once a week; and in so far as you find yourselves practising the things written here, give thanks for this to God, the Giver of all good; in so far, however, as any of you finds herself to be in some particular defective, let her lament the past and be on her guard in the time to come, praying both that her debt may be forgiven, and that she may not be led into temptation.

LETTER CCXII.

(A.D. 423.)

TO QUINTILIANUS, MY LORD MOST BLESSED AND BROTHER AND FELLOW BISHOP DESERVEDLY VENERABLE, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING.

VENERABLE father, I commend to you in the love of Christ these honourable servants of God and precious members of Christ, Galla, a widow (who has taken on herself sacred vows), and her daughter Simplicia, a consecrated virgin, who is subject to her mother by reason of her age, but above her by reason of her holiness. We have nourished them as far as we have been able with the word of God; and by this epistle, as if it were with my own hand, I commit them to you, to be comforted and aided in every way which their interest or necessity requires. This duty your Holiness would doubtless have undertaken without any recommendation from me; for if it is our duty on account of the Jerusalem above, of which we all are citizens, and in which they desire to have a place

of distinguished holiness, to cherish towards them not only the affection due to fellow-citizens, but even brotherly love, how much stronger is their claim on you, who reside in the same country in this earth in which these ladies, for the love of Christ, renounced the distinctions of this world! I also ask you to condescend to receive with the same love with which I have offered it my official salutation, and to remember me in your prayers. These ladies carry with them relics of the most blessed and glorious martyr Stephen: your Holiness knows how to give due honour to these, as we have done.[1]

LETTER CCXIII.

(SEPTEMBER 26TH, A.D. 426.)

RECORD, PREPARED BY ST. AUGUSTINE, OF THE PROCEEDINGS ON THE OCCASION OF HIS DESIGNATING ERACLIUS TO SUCCEED HIM IN THE EPISCOPAL CHAIR, AND TO RELIEVE HIM MEANWHILE IN HIS OLD AGE OF A PART OF HIS RESPONSIBILITIES.

In the Church of Peace in the district of Hippo Regius, on the 26th day of September in the year of the twelfth consulship of the most renowned Theodosius, and of the second consulship of Valentinian Augustus:[2]*—Bishop Augustine having taken his seat along with his fellow bishops Religianus and Martinianus, there being present Saturninus, Leporius, Barnabas, Fortunatianus, Rusticus, Lazarus, and Eraclius,—presbyters,—while the clergy and a large congregation of laymen stood by,—Bishop Augustine said:—*

"THE business which I brought before you yesterday, my beloved, as one in connection with which I wished you to attend, as I see you have done in greater numbers than usual, must be at once disposed of. For while your minds are anxiously preoccupied with it, you would scarcely listen to

[1] A memorial chapel for the reception of relics of Saint Stephen had been built at Hippo.—See *City of God*, book XXII. vol. ii. p. 495.

[2] A.D. 426.

me if I were to speak of any other subject. We all are mortal, and the day which shall be the last of life on earth is to every man at all times uncertain; but in infancy there is hope of entering on boyhood, and so our hope goes on, looking forward from boyhood to youth, from youth to manhood, and from manhood to old age: whether these hopes may be realized or not is uncertain, but there is in each case something which may be hoped for. But old age has no other period of this life to look forward to with expectation: how long old age may in any case be prolonged is uncertain, but it is certain that no other age destined to take its place lies beyond. I came to this town—for such was the will of God—when I was in the prime of life. I was young then, but now I am old. I know that churches are wont to be disturbed after the decease of their bishops by ambitious or contentious parties, and I feel it to be my duty to take measures to prevent this community from suffering, in connection with my decease, that which I have often observed and lamented elsewhere. You are aware, my beloved, that I recently visited the Church of Milevi; for certain brethren, and especially the servants of God there, requested me to come, because some disturbance was apprehended after the death of my brother and fellow bishop Severus, of blessed memory. I went accordingly, and the Lord was in mercy pleased so to help us that they harmoniously accepted as bishop the person designated by their former bishop in his lifetime; for when this designation had become known to them, they willingly acquiesced in the choice which he had made. An omission, however, had occurred by which some were dissatisfied; for brother Severus, believing that it might be sufficient for him to mention to the clergy the name of his successor, did not speak of the matter to the people, which gave rise to dissatisfaction in the minds of some. But why should I say more? By the good pleasure of God, the dissatisfaction was removed, joy took its place in the minds of all, and he was ordained as bishop whom Severus had proposed. To obviate all such occasion of complaint in this case, I now intimate to all here my desire, which I believe to be also the will of God: I wish to have for my successor the presbyter Eraclius."

The people shouted, "To God be thanks! To Christ be praise" (*this was repeated twenty-three times*). *"O Christ, hear us; may Augustine live long!"* (*repeated sixteen times*). *"We will have thee as our father, thee as our bishop"* (*repeated eight times*).

2. *Silence having been obtained, Bishop Augustine said:—*

"It is unnecessary for me to say anything in praise of Eraclius; I esteem his wisdom and spare his modesty; it is enough that you know him: and I declare that I desire in regard to him what I know you also to desire, and if I had not known it before, I would have had proof of it to-day. This, therefore, I desire; this I ask from the Lord our God in prayers, the warmth of which is not abated by the chill of age; this I exhort, admonish, and entreat you also to pray for along with me,—that God may confirm that which He has wrought in us[1] by blending and fusing together the minds of all in the peace of Christ. May He who has sent him to me preserve him! preserve him safe, preserve him blameless, that as he gives me joy while I live, he may fill my place when I die.

"The notaries of the church are, as you observe, recording what I say, and recording what you say; both my address and your acclamations are not allowed to fall to the ground. To speak more plainly, we are making up an ecclesiastical record of this day's proceedings; for I wish them to be in this way confirmed so far as pertains to men."

The people shouted thirty-six times, "To God be thanks! To Christ be praise!" "O Christ, hear us; may Augustine live long!" was said thirteen times. "Thee, our father! thee, our bishop!" was said eight times. "He is worthy and just," was said twenty times. "Well deserving, well worthy!" was said five times. "He is worthy and just!" was said six times.

3. *Silence having been obtained, Bishop Augustine said:—*

"It is my wish, as I was just now saying, that my desire and your desire be confirmed, so far as pertains to men, by being

[1] Ps. lxviii. 28.

placed on an ecclesiastical record; but so far as pertains to the will of the Almighty, let us all pray, as I said before, that God would confirm that which He has wrought in us."

The people shouted, saying sixteen times, "We give thanks for your decision:" then twelve times, "Agreed! Agreed!" and then six times, "Thee, our father! Eraclius, our bishop!"

4. *Silence having been obtained, Bishop Augustine said:—*

"I approve of that of which you also express your approval;[1] but I do not wish that to be done in regard to him which was done in my own case. What was done many of you know; in fact, all of you, excepting only those who at that time were not born, or had not attained to the years of understanding. When my father and bishop, the aged Valerius, of blessed memory, was still living, I was ordained bishop and occupied the episcopal see along with him, which I did not know to have been forbidden by the Council of Nice; and he was equally ignorant of the prohibition. I do not wish to have my son here exposed to the same censure as was incurred in my own case."

The people shouted, saying thirteen times, "To God be thanks! To Christ be praise!"

5. *Silence having been obtained, Bishop Augustine said:—*

"He shall be as he now is, a presbyter, meanwhile; but afterwards, at such time as may please God, your bishop. But now I will assuredly begin to do, as the compassion of Christ may enable me, what I have not hitherto done. You know what for several years I would have done, had you permitted me. It was agreed between you and me that no one should intrude on me for five days of each week, that I might discharge the duty in the study of Scripture which my brethren and fathers the co-bishops were pleased to assign to me in the two councils of Numidia and Carthage. The agreement was duly recorded, you gave your consent, you signified it by acclamations. The record of your consent and of your acclamations, was read aloud to you. For a short time the agree-

[1] Referring to their last words, giving to Eraclius the title of bishop.

ment was observed by you; afterwards, it was violated without consideration, and I am not permitted to have leisure for the work which I wish to do: forenoon and afternoon alike, I am involved in the affairs of other people demanding my attention. I now beseech you, and solemnly engage you, for Christ's sake, to suffer me to devolve the burden of this part of my labours on this young man, I mean on Eraclius, the presbyter, whom to-day I designate in the name of Christ as my successor in the office of bishop."

The people shouted, saying twenty-six times, "We give thanks for your decision."

6. *Silence having been obtained, Bishop Augustine said :—*

"I give thanks before the Lord our God for your love and your goodwill; yes, I give thanks to God for these. Wherefore, henceforth, my brethren, let everything which was wont to be brought by you to me be brought to him. In any case in which he may think my advice necessary, I will not refuse it; far be it from me to withdraw this: nevertheless, let everything be brought to him which used to be brought to me. Let Eraclius himself, if in any case, perchance, he be at a loss as to what should be done, either consult me or claim an assistant in me, whom he has known as a father. By this arrangement you will, on the one hand, suffer no disadvantage, and I will at length, for the brief space during which God may prolong my life, devote the remainder of my days, be they few or many, not to idleness nor to the indulgence of a love of ease, but, so far as Eraclius kindly gives me leave, to the study of the sacred Scriptures: this also will be of service to him, and through him to you likewise. Let no one therefore grudge me this leisure, for I claim it only in order to do important work.

"I see that I have now transacted with you all the business necessary in the matter for which I called you together. The last thing I have to ask is, that as many of you as are able be pleased to subscribe your names to this record. At this point I require a response from you. Let me have it: show your assent by some acclamations."

The people shouted, saying twenty-five times, "Agreed! agreed!" then twenty-eight times, "It is worthy, it is

just!" then fourteen times, "Agreed! agreed!" then twenty-five times, "He has long been worthy, he has long been deserving!" then thirteen times, "We give thanks for your decision!" then eighteen times, "O Christ, hear us; preserve Eraclius!"

7. *Silence having been obtained, Bishop Augustine said:—*

"It is well that we are able to transact around His sacrifice those things which belong to God; and in this hour appointed for our supplications, I especially exhort you, beloved, to suspend all your occupations and business, and pour out before the Lord your petitions for this church, and for me, and for the presbyter Eraclius."

LETTER CCXVIII.

(A.D. 426.)

TO PALATINUS, MY WELL-BELOVED LORD AND SON, MOST TENDERLY LONGED FOR, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING.

1. YOUR life of eminent fortitude and fruitfulness towards the Lord our God has brought to us great joy. For "you have made choice of instruction from your youth upwards, that you may still find wisdom even to grey hairs;"[1] for "wisdom is the grey hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age;"[2] which may the Lord, who knoweth how to give good gifts unto His children, give to you asking, seeking, knocking.[3] Although you have many counsellors and many counsels to direct you in the path which leads to eternal glory, and although, above all, you have the grace of Christ, which has so effectually spoken in saving power in your heart, nevertheless we also, as in duty bound by the love which we owe to you, offer to you, in hereby reciprocating your salutation, some words of counsel, designed not to awaken you as one hindered by sloth or sleep, but to stimulate and quicken you in the race which you are already running.

2. You require wisdom, my son, for stedfastness in this race, as it was under the influence of wisdom that you entered on it at first. Let this then be "a part of your wisdom, to

[1] Ecclus. vi. 18. [2] Wisd. iv. 9. [3] Matt. vii. 11.

know whose gift it is."[1] "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass: and He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday."[2] "He will make straight thy path, and guide thy steps in peace."[3] As you despised your prospects of greatness in this world, lest you should glory in the abundance of riches which you had begun to covet after the manner of the children of this world, so now, in taking up the yoke of the Lord and His burden, let not your confidence be in your own strength; so shall "His yoke be easy, and His burden light."[4] For in the book of Psalms those are alike censured "who trust in their strength," and "who boast themselves in the multitude of their riches."[5] Therefore, as formerly you did not seek glory in riches, but most wisely despised that which you had begun to desire, so now be on your guard against insidious temptation to trust in your strength; for you are but man, and "cursed is every one that trusteth in man."[6] But by all means trust in God with your whole heart, and He will Himself be your strength, wherein you may trust with piety and thankfulness, and to Him you may say with humility and boldness, "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength;"[7] because even the love of God, which, when it is perfect, "casteth out fear,"[8] is shed abroad in our hearts, not by our strength, that is, by any human power, but, as the apostle says, "by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us."[9]

3. "Watch, therefore, and pray that you enter not into temptation."[10] Such prayer is indeed in itself an admonition to you that you need the help of the Lord, and that you ought not to rest upon yourself your hope of living well. For now you pray, not that you may obtain the riches and honours of this present world, or any unsubstantial human possession, but that you may not enter into temptation, a thing which would not be asked in prayer if a man could accomplish it for himself by his own will. Wherefore we would not pray that we may

[1] Wisd. viii. 20.
[2] Ps. xxxvii. 5, 6.
[3] Prov. iv. 27, LXX.
[4] Matt. xi. 30.
[5] Ps. xlix. 6, LXX.
[6] Jer. xvii. 5.
[7] Ps. xviii. 1.
[8] 1 John iv. 18.
[9] Rom. v. 5.
[10] Mark xiv. 38.

not enter into temptation if our own will sufficed for our protection; and yet if the will to avoid temptation were wanting to us, we could not so pray. It may, therefore, be present with us to will,[1] when we have through His own gift been made wise, but we must pray that we may be able to perform that which we have so willed. In the fact that you have begun to exercise this true wisdom, you have reason to give thanks. "For what have you which you have not received? But if you have received it, beware that you boast not as if you had not received it,"[2] that is, as if you could have had it of yourself. Knowing, however, whence you have received it, ask Him by whose gift it was begun to grant that it may be perfected. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do, of His good pleasure;"[3] for "the will is prepared by God,"[4] and "the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delighteth in his way."[5] Holy meditation on these things will preserve you, so that your wisdom shall be piety, that is, that by God's gift you shall be good, and not ungrateful for the grace of Christ.

4. Your parents, unfeignedly rejoicing with you in the better hope which in the Lord you have begun to cherish, are longing earnestly for your presence. But whether you be absent from us or present with us in the body, we desire to have you with us in the one Spirit by whom love is shed abroad in our hearts, so that, in whatever place our bodies may sojourn, our spirits may be in no degree sundered from each other.

We have most thankfully received the cloaks of goat's-hair cloth[6] which you sent to us, in which gift you have yourself anticipated me in admonition as to the duty of being often engaged in prayer, and of practising humility in our supplications.

[1] Rom. vii. 18. [2] 1 Cor. iv. 7. [3] Phil. ii. 12, 13.
[4] Prov. viii. 35, LXX. [5] Ps. xxxvii. 23. [6] Cilicia.

LETTER CCXIX.

(A.D. 426.)

TO PROCULUS AND CYLINUS, BRETHREN MOST BELOVED AND HONOURABLE, AND PARTNERS IN THE SACERDOTAL OFFICE, AUGUSTINE, FLORENTIUS, AND SECUNDINUS SEND GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. When our son Leporius, whom for his obstinacy in error you had justly and fitly rebuked, came to us after he had been expelled by you, we received him as one afflicted for his good, whom we should, if possible, deliver from error and restore to spiritual health. For, as you obeyed in regard to him the apostolic precept, "Warn the unruly," so it was our part to obey the precept immediately annexed, "Comfort the feeble-minded, and support the weak."[1] His error was indeed not unimportant, seeing that he neither approved what is right nor perceived what is true in some things relating to the only-begotten Son of God, of whom it is written that, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," but that when the fulness of time had come, "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us;"[2] for he denied that God became man, regarding it as a doctrine from which it must follow necessarily that the divine substance in which He is equal to the Father suffered some unworthy change or corruption, and not seeing that he was thus introducing into the Trinity a fourth person, which is utterly contrary to the sound doctrine of the Creed and of Catholic truth. Since, however, dearly beloved and honourable brethren, he had as a fallible man "been overtaken" in this error, we did our utmost, the Lord helping us, to instruct him "in the spirit of meekness," especially remembering that when the "chosen vessel" gave this command to which we refer, he added, "Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted,"—lest some, perchance, should so rejoice in the measure of spiritual progress as to imagine that they could no longer be tempted like other men,—and joined with it the salutary and peace-promoting sentence, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a

[1] 1 Thess. v. 14. [2] John i. 1, 14.

man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself."[1]

2. This restoration of Leporius we could perhaps in nowise have accomplished, had you not previously censured and punished those things in him which required correction. So then the same Lord, our Divine Physician, using His own instruments and servants, has by you wounded him when he was proud, and by us healed him when he was penitent, according to His own saying, "I wound, and I heal."[2] The same Divine Ruler and Overseer of His own house has by you thrown down what was defective in the building, and has by us replaced with a well-ordered structure what He had removed. The same Divine Husbandman has in His careful diligence by you rooted up what was barren and noxious in His field, and by us planted what is useful and fruitful. Let us not, therefore, ascribe glory to ourselves, but to the mercy of Him in whose hand both we and all our words are. And as we humbly praise the work which you have done as His ministers in the case of our son aforesaid, so do you rejoice with holy joy in the work performed by us. Receive, then, with the love of fathers and of brethren, him whom we have with merciful severity corrected. For although one part of the work was done by you and another part by us, both parts, being indispensable to our brother's salvation, were done by the same love. The same God was therefore working in both, for "God is love."[3]

3. Wherefore, as he has been welcomed into fellowship by us on the ground of his repentance, let him be welcomed by you on the ground of his letter,[4] to which letter we have thought it right to adhibit our signatures attesting its genuineness. We have not the least doubt that you, in the exercise of Christian love, will not only hear with pleasure of his amendment, but also make it known to those to whom his error was a stumbling-block. For those who came with him to us have also been corrected and restored along with him, as is declared by their signatures, which have been adhibited to

[1] Gal. vi. 1, 3. [2] Deut. xxxii. 39. [3] 1 John iv. 8, 16.

[4] A formal written retractation of his errors, called elsewhere "emendationis libellum."

the letter in our presence. It remains only that you, being made joyful by the salvation of a brother, condescend to make us joyful in our turn by sending a reply to our communication. Farewell in the Lord, most beloved and honourable brethren; such is our desire on your behalf: remember us.

LETTER CCXX.

(A.D. 427.)

TO MY LORD BONIFACE,[1] MY SON COMMENDED TO THE GUARDIANSHIP AND GUIDANCE OF DIVINE MERCY FOR PRESENT AND ETERNAL SALVATION, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING.

1. NEVER could I have found a more trustworthy man, nor one who could have more ready access to your ear when bearing a letter from me, than this servant and minister of Christ, the deacon Paulus, a man very dear to both of us, whom the Lord has now brought to me in order that I may have the opportunity of addressing you, not in reference to your power and the honour which you hold in this evil world, nor in reference to the preservation of your corruptible and mortal body,—because this also is destined to pass away, and how soon no one can tell,—but in reference to that salvation which has been promised to us by Christ, who was here on earth despised and crucified in order that He might teach us rather to despise than to desire the good things of this world, and to set our affections and our hope on that world which He has revealed by His resurrection. For He has risen from the dead, and now "dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him."[2]

2. I know that you have no lack of friends, who love you so far as life in this world is concerned, and who in regard to it give you counsels, sometimes useful, sometimes the reverse; for they are men, and therefore, though they use their wisdom to the best of their ability in regard to what is present, they know not what may happen on the morrow. But it is not easy for any one to give you counsel in reference to God, to prevent the perdition of your soul, not because you lack

[1] See note to Letter CLXXXIX., p. 366. [2] Rom. vi. 9.

friends who would do this, but because it is difficult for them to find an opportunity of speaking with you on these subjects. For I myself have often longed for this, and never found place or time in which I might deal with you as I ought to deal with a man whom I ardently love in Christ. You know besides in what state you found me at Hippo, when you did me the honour to come to visit me,—how I was scarcely able to speak, being prostrated by bodily weakness. Now, then, my son, hear me when I have this opportunity of addressing you at least by a letter,—a rare opportunity, for it was not in my power to send such communication to you in the midst of your dangers, both because I apprehended danger to the bearer, and because I was afraid lest my letter should reach persons into whose hands I was unwilling that it should fall. Wherefore I beg you to forgive me if you think that I have been more afraid than I should have been; however this may be, I have stated what I feared.

3. Hear me, therefore; nay, rather hear the Lord our God speaking by me, His feeble servant. Call to remembrance what manner of man you were while your former wife, of hallowed memory, still lived, and how under the stroke of her death, while that event was yet recent, the vanity of this world made you recoil from it, and how you earnestly desired to enter the service of God. We know and we can testify what you said as to your state of mind and your desires when you conversed with us at Tubunæ. My brother Alypius and I were alone with you. [I beseech you, then, to call to remembrance that conversation], for I do not think that the worldly cares with which you are now engrossed can have such power over you as to have effaced this wholly from your memory. You were then desirous to abandon all the public business in which you were engaged, and to withdraw into sacred retirement, and live like the servants of God who have embraced a monastic life. And what was it that prevented you from acting according to these desires? Was it not that you were influenced by considering, on our representation of the matter, how much service the work which then occupied you might render to the churches of Christ if you pursued it with this single aim, that they, protected from all disturbance

by barbarian hordes, might live "a quiet and peaceable life," as the apostle says, "in all godliness and honesty;"[1] resolving at the same time for your own part to seek no more from this world than would suffice for the support of yourself and those dependent on you, wearing as your girdle the cincture of a perfectly chaste self-restraint, and having underneath the accoutrements of the soldier the surer and stronger defence of spiritual armour.

4. At the very time when we were full of joy that you had formed this resolution, you embarked on a voyage and you married a second wife. Your embarkation was an act of the obedience due, as the apostle has taught us, to the "higher powers;"[2] but you would not have married again had you not, abandoning the continence to which you had devoted yourself, been overcome by concupiscence. When I learned this, I was, I must confess it, dumb with amazement; but, in my sorrow, I was in some degree comforted by hearing that you refused to marry her unless she became a Catholic before the marriage, and yet the heresy of those who refuse to believe in the true Son of God has so prevailed in your house, that by these heretics your daughter was baptized. Now, if the report be true (would to God that it were false!) that even some who were dedicated to God as His handmaids have been by these heretics re-baptized, with what floods of tears ought this great calamity to be bewailed by us! Men are saying, moreover,—perhaps it is an unfounded slander,—that one wife does not satisfy your passions, and that you have been defiled by consorting with some other women as concubines.

5. What shall I say regarding these evils—so patent to all, and so great in magnitude as well as number—of which you have been, directly or indirectly, the cause since the time of your being married? You are a Christian, you have a conscience, you fear God; consider, then, for yourself some things which I prefer to leave unsaid, and you will find for how great evils you ought to do penance; and I believe that it is to afford you an opportunity of doing this in the way in which it ought to be done, that the Lord is now sparing you and delivering you from all dangers. But if you will listen to the

[1] 1 Tim. ii. 2. [2] Rom. xiii. 1.

counsel of Scripture, I pray you, "make no tarrying to turn to the Lord, and put not off from day to day."[1] You allege, indeed, that you have good reason for what you have done, and that I cannot be a judge of the sufficiency of that reason, because I cannot hear both sides of the question;[2] but, whatever be your reason, the nature of which it is not necessary at present either to investigate or to discuss, can you, in the presence of God, affirm that you would ever have come into the embarrassments of your present position had you not loved the good things of this world, which, being a servant of God, such as we knew you to be formerly, it was your duty to have utterly despised and esteemed as of no value,—accepting, indeed, what was offered to you, that you might devote it to pious uses, but not so coveting that which was denied to you, or was entrusted to your care, as to be brought on its account into the difficulties of your present position, in which, while good is loved, evil things are perpetrated,—few, indeed, by you, but many because of you, and while things are dreaded which, if hurtful, are so only for a short time, things are done which are really hurtful for eternity?

6. To mention one of these things,—who can help seeing that many persons follow you for the purpose of defending your power or safety, who, although they may be all faithful to you, and no treachery is to be apprehended from any of them, are desirous of obtaining through you certain advantages which they also covet, not with a godly desire, but from worldly motives? And in this way you, whose duty it is to curb and check your own passions, are forced to satisfy those of others. To accomplish this, many things which are displeasing to God must be done; and yet, after all, these passions are not thus satisfied, for they are more easily mortified finally in those who love God, than satisfied, even for a time, in those who love the world. Therefore the Divine Scripture says: "Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth

[1] Ecclus. v. 8. [2] See note on Letter CLXXXIX. p. 366.

the will of God abideth for ever, as God abideth for ever."[1] Associated, therefore, as you are with such multitudes of armed men, whose passions must be humoured, and whose cruelty is dreaded, how can the desires of these men who love the world ever be, I do not say satiated, but even partially gratified by you, in your anxiety to prevent still greater wide-spread evils, unless you do that which God forbids, and in so doing become obnoxious to threatened judgment? So complete has been the havoc wrought in order to indulge their passions, that it would be difficult now to find anything for the plunderer to carry away.

7. But what shall I say of the devastation of Africa at this hour by hordes of African barbarians, to whom no resistance is offered, while you are engrossed with such embarrassments in your own circumstances, and are taking no measures for averting this calamity? Who would ever have believed, who would have feared, after Boniface had become a Count of the Empire and of Africa, and had been placed in command in Africa with so large an army and so great authority, that the same man who formerly, as Tribune, kept all these barbarous tribes in peace, by storming their strongholds, and menacing them with his small band of brave confederates, should now have suffered the barbarians to be so bold, to encroach so far, to destroy and plunder so much, and to turn into deserts such vast regions once densely peopled? Where were any found who did not predict that, as soon as you obtained the authority of Count, the African hordes would be not only checked, but made tributaries to the Roman Empire? And now, how completely the event has disappointed men's hopes you yourself perceive; in fact, I need say nothing more on this subject, because your own reflection must suggest much more than I can put in words.

8. Perhaps you defend yourself by replying that the blame here ought rather to rest on persons who have injured you, and, instead of justly requiting the services rendered by you in your office, have returned evil for good. These matters I am not able to examine and judge. I beseech you rather to contemplate and inquire into the matter, in which you know that you have to do not with men at all, but with God; living in

[1] 1 John ii. 15–17.

Christ as a believer, you are bound to fear lest you offend Him. For my attention is more engaged by higher causes, believing that men ought to ascribe Africa's great calamities to their own sins. Nevertheless, I would not wish you to belong to the number of those wicked and unjust men whom God uses as instruments in inflicting temporal punishments on whom He pleases; for He who justly employs their malice to inflict temporal judgments on others, reserves eternal punishments for the unjust themselves if they be not reformed. Be it yours to fix your thoughts on God, and to look to Christ, who has conferred on you so great blessings and endured for you so great sufferings. Those who desire to belong to His kingdom, and to live for ever happily with Him and under Him, love even their enemies, do good to them that hate them, and pray for those from whom they suffer persecution;[1] and if, at any time, in the way of discipline they use irksome severity, yet they never lay aside the sincerest love. If these benefits, though earthly and transitory, are conferred on you by the Roman Empire,—for that empire itself is earthly, not heavenly, and cannot bestow what it has not in its power,—if, I say, benefits are conferred on you, return not evil for good; and if evil be inflicted on you, return not evil for evil. Which of these two has happened in your case I am unwilling to discuss, I am unable to judge. I speak to a Christian—return not either evil for good, nor evil for evil.

9. You say to me, perhaps: In circumstances so difficult, what do you wish me to do? If you ask counsel of me in a worldly point of view how your safety in this transitory life may be secured, and the power and wealth belonging to you at present may be preserved or even increased, I know not what to answer you, for any counsel regarding things so uncertain as these must partake of the uncertainty inherent in them. But if you consult me regarding your relation to God and the salvation of your soul, and if you fear the word of truth which says: "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"[2] I have a plain answer to give. I am prepared with advice to which you may well give heed. But what need is there for my saying anything else than what I

[1] Matt. v. 44. [2] Matt. xvi. 26.

have already said. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."[1] Here is counsel! Seize it and act on it. Show that you are a brave man. Vanquish the desires with which the world is loved. Do penance for the evils of your past life, when, vanquished by your passions, you were drawn away by sinful desires. If you receive this counsel, and hold it fast, and act on it, you will both attain to those blessings which are certain, and occupy yourself in the midst of these uncertain things without forfeiting the salvation of your soul.

10. But perhaps you again ask of me how you can do these things, entangled as you are with so great worldly difficulties. Pray earnestly, and say to God, in the words of the Psalm: "Bring Thou me out of my distresses,"[2] for these distresses terminate when the passions in which they originate are vanquished. He who has heard your prayer and ours on your behalf, that you might be delivered from the numerous and great dangers of visible wars in which the body is exposed to the danger of losing the life which sooner or later must end, but in which the soul perishes not unless it be held captive by evil passions,—He, I say, will hear your prayer that you may, in an invisible and spiritual conflict, overcome your inward and invisible enemies, that is to say, your passions themselves, and may so use the world, as not abusing it, so that with its good things you may do good, not become bad through possessing them. Because these things are in themselves good, and are not given to men except by Him who has power over all things in heaven and earth. Lest these gifts of His should be reckoned bad, they are given also to the good; at the same time, lest they should be reckoned great, or the supreme good, they are given also to the bad. Further, these things are taken away from the good for their trial, and from the bad for their punishment.

[1] 1 John ii. 15–17. [2] Ps. xxv. 17.

11. For who is so ignorant, who so foolish, as not to see that the health of this mortal body, and the strength of its corruptible members, and victory over men who are our enemies, and temporal honours and power, and all other mere earthly advantages are given both to the good and to the bad, and are taken away both from the good and from the bad alike? But the salvation of the soul, along with immortality of the body, and the power of righteousness, and victory over hostile passions, and glory, and honour, and everlasting peace, are not given except to the good. Therefore love these things, covet these things, and seek them by every means in your power. With a view to acquire and retain these things, give alms, pour forth prayers, practise fasting as far as you can without injury to your body. But do not love these earthly goods, how much soever they may abound to you. So use them as to do many good things by them, but not one evil thing for their sake. For all such things will perish; but good works, yea, even those good works which are performed by means of the perishable good things of this world, shall never perish.

12. If you had not now a wife, I would say to you what we said at Tubunæ, that you should live in the holy state of continence, and would add that you should now do what we prevented you from doing at that time, namely, withdraw yourself so far as might be possible without prejudice to the public welfare from the labours of military service, and take to yourself the leisure which you then desired for that life in the society of the saints in which the soldiers of Christ fight in silence, not to kill men, but to "wrestle against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness,"[1] that is, the devil and his angels. For the saints gain their victories over enemies whom they cannot see, and yet they gain the victory over these unseen enemies by gaining the victory over things which are the objects of sense. I am, however, prevented from exhorting you to that mode of life by your having a wife, since without her consent it is not lawful for you to live under a vow of continence; because, although you did wrong in marrying again after the declaration which you made at Tubunæ, she, being not aware of this, became your wife innocently and without

[1] Eph. vi. 12.

restrictions. Would that you could persuade her to agree to a vow of continence, that you might without hindrance render to God what you know to be due to Him! If, however, you cannot make this agreement with her, guard carefully by all means conjugal chastity, and pray to God, who will deliver you out of difficulties, that you may at some future time be able to do what is meanwhile impossible. This, however, does not affect your obligation to love God and not to love the world, to hold the faith stedfastly even in the cares of war, if you must still be engaged in them, and to seek peace; to make the good things of this world serviceable in good works, and not to do what is evil in labouring to obtain these earthly good things, —in all these duties your wife is not, or, if she is, ought not to be, a hindrance to you.

These things I have written, my dearly beloved son, at the bidding of the love with which I love you with regard not to this world, but to God; and because, mindful of the words of Scripture, "Reprove a wise man, and he will love thee; reprove a fool, and he will hate thee more,"[1] I was bound to think of you as certainly not a fool but a wise man.

LETTER CCXXVII.

(A.D. 428 or 429.)

TO THE AGED ALYPIUS, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING.

BROTHER PAULUS has arrived here safely: he reports that the pains devoted to the business which engaged him have been rewarded with success; the Lord will grant that with these his trouble in that matter may terminate. He salutes you warmly, and tells us tidings concerning Gabinianus which give us joy, namely, that having by God's mercy obtained a prosperous issue in his case, he is now not only in name a Christian, but in sincerity a very excellent convert to the faith, and was baptized recently at Easter, having both in his heart and on his lips the grace which he received. How much I long for him I can never express; but you know that I love him.

[1] Prov. ix. 8.

The president of the medical faculty,[1] Dioscorus, has also professed the Christian faith, having obtained grace at the same time. Hear the manner of his conversion, for his stubborn neck and his bold tongue could not be subdued without some miracle. His daughter, the only comfort of his life, was sick, and her sickness became so serious that her life was, according even to her father's own admission, despaired of. It is reported, and the truth of the report is beyond question, for even before brother Paul's return the fact was mentioned to me by Count Peregrinus, a most respectable and truly Christian man, who was baptized at the same time with Dioscorus and Gabinianus,—it is reported, I say, that the old man, feeling himself at last constrained to implore the compassion of Christ, bound himself by a vow that he would become a Christian if he saw her restored to health. She recovered, but he perfidiously drew back from fulfilling his vow. Nevertheless the hand of the Lord was still stretched forth, for suddenly he is smitten with blindness, and immediately the cause of this calamity was impressed upon his mind. He confessed his fault aloud, and vowed again that if his sight were given back he would perform what he had vowed. He recovered his sight, fulfilled his vow, and still the hand of God was stretched forth. He had not committed the Creed to memory, or perhaps had refused to commit it, and had excused himself on the plea of inability. God had seen this. Immediately after all the ceremonies of his reception he is seized with paralysis, affecting many, indeed almost all his members, and even his tongue. Then, being warned by a dream, he confesses in writing that it had been told to him that this had happened because he had not repeated the Creed. After that confession the use of all his members was restored to him, except the tongue alone; nevertheless he, being still under this affliction, made manifest by writing that he had, notwithstanding, learned the Creed, and still retained it in his memory; and so that frivolous loquacity which, as you know, blemished his natural kindliness, and made him, when he mocked Christians, exceedingly profane, was altogether destroyed in him. What shall I say, but,

[1] Archiater.

"Let us sing a hymn to the Lord, and highly exalt Him for ever! Amen."

LETTER CCXXVIII.

(A.D. 428 or 429.)

TO HIS HOLY BROTHER AND CO-BISHOP HONORATUS,[1] AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

I THOUGHT that by sending to your Grace a copy of the letter which I wrote to our brother and co-bishop Quodvultdeus,[2] I had earned exemption from the burden which you have imposed upon me, by asking my advice as to what you ought to do in the midst of the dangers which have befallen us in these times. For although I wrote briefly, I think that I did not pass over anything that was necessary either to be said by me or heard by my questioner in correspondence on the subject: for I said that, on the one hand, those who desire to remove, if they can, to fortified places are not to be forbidden to do so; and, on the other hand, we ought not to break the ties by which the love of Christ has bound us as ministers not to forsake the churches which it is our duty to serve. The words which I used in the letter referred to were: "Therefore, however small may be the congregation of God's people among whom we are, if our ministry is so necessary to them that it is a clear duty not to withdraw it from them, it remains for us to say to the Lord, 'Be Thou to us a God of defence, and a strong fortress.'"[3]

2. But this counsel does not commend itself to you, because, as you say in your letter, it does not become us to endeavour to act in opposition to the precept or example of the Lord, admonishing us that we should flee from one city to another. We remember, indeed, the words of the Lord, "When they persecute you in one city, flee to another;"[4] but who can believe that the Lord wished this to be done in cases in which the flocks which He purchased with His own blood are by the desertion of their pastors left without that necessary

[1] Bishop of Thiaba in Mauritania.
[2] This letter is not extant.
[3] Ps. xxxi. 3, LXX.
[4] Matt. x. 23.

ministry which is indispensable to their life? Did Christ do this Himself, when, carried by His parents, He fled into Egypt in His infancy? No; for He had not then gathered churches which we could affirm to have been deserted by Him. Or, when the Apostle Paul was "let down in a basket through a window," to prevent his enemies from seizing him, and so escaped their hands,[1] was the church in Damascus deprived of the necessary labours of Christ's servants? Was not all the service that was requisite supplied after his departure by other brethren settled in that city? For the apostle had done this at their request, in order that he might preserve for the Church's good his life, which the persecutor on that occasion specially sought to destroy. Let those, therefore, who are servants of Christ, His ministers in word and sacrament, do what He has commanded or permitted. When any of them is specially sought for by persecutors, let him by all means flee from one city to another, provided that the Church is not hereby deserted, but that others who are not specially sought after remain to supply spiritual food to their fellow-servants, whom they know to be unable otherwise to maintain spiritual life. When, however, the danger of all, bishops, clergy, and laity, is alike, let not those who depend upon the aid of others be deserted by those on whom they depend. In that case, either let all remove together to fortified places, or let those who must remain be not deserted by those through whom in things pertaining to the Church their necessities must be provided for; and so let them share life in common, or share in common that which the Father of their family appoints them to suffer.

3. But if it shall happen that all suffer, whether some suffer less, and others more, or all suffer equally, it is easy to see who among them are suffering for the sake of others: they are obviously those who, although they might have freed themselves from such evils by flight, have chosen to remain rather than abandon others to whom they are necessary. By such conduct especially is proved the love commended by the Apostle John in the words: "Christ laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."[2]

[1] 2 Cor. xi. 33. [2] 1 John iii. 16.

For those who betake themselves to flight, or are prevented from doing so only by circumstances thwarting their design, if they be seized and made to suffer, endure this suffering only for themselves, not for their brethren; but those who are involved in suffering because of their resolving not to abandon others, whose Christian welfare depended on them, are unquestionably "laying down their lives for the brethren."

4. For this reason, the saying which we have heard attributed to a certain bishop, namely: "If the Lord has commanded us to flee, in those persecutions in which we may reap the fruit of martyrdom, how much more ought we to escape by flight, if we can, from barren sufferings inflicted by the hostile incursions of barbarians!" is a saying true and worthy of acceptation, but applicable only to those who are not confined by the obligations of ecclesiastical office. For the man who, having it in his power to escape from the violence of the enemy, chooses not to flee from it, lest in so doing he should abandon the ministry of Christ, without which men can neither become Christians nor live as such, assuredly finds a greater reward of his love, than the man who, fleeing not for his brethren's sake but for his own, is seized by persecutors, and, refusing to deny Christ, suffers martyrdom.

5. What, then, shall we say to the position which you thus state in your former epistle:—"I do not see what good we can do to ourselves or to the people by continuing to remain in the churches, except to see before our eyes men slain, women outraged, churches burned, ourselves expiring amid torments applied in order to extort from us what we do not possess"? God is powerful to hear the prayers of His children, and to avert those things which they fear; and we ought not, on account of evils that are uncertain, to make up our minds absolutely to the desertion of that ministry, without which the people must certainly suffer ruin, not in the affairs of this life, but of that other life which ought to be cared for with incomparably greater diligence and solicitude. For if those evils which are apprehended, as possibly visiting the places in which we are, were certain, all those for whose sake it was

our duty to remain would take flight before us, and would thus exempt us from the necessity of remaining; for no one says that ministers are under obligation to remain in any place where none remain to whom their ministry is necessary. In this way some holy bishops fled from Spain when their congregations had, before their flight, been annihilated, the members having either fled, or died by the sword, or perished in the siege of their towns, or gone into captivity; but many more of the bishops of that country remained in the midst of these abounding dangers, because those for whose sakes they remained were still remaining there. And if some have abandoned their flocks, this is what we say ought not to be done, for they were not taught to do so by divine authority, but were, through human infirmity, either deceived by an error or overcome by fear.

6. [We maintain, as one alternative, that they were deceived by an error,] for why do they think that indiscriminate compliance must be given to the precept in which they read of fleeing from one city to another, and not shrink with abhorrence from the character of the "hireling," who "seeth the wolf coming, and fleeth, because he careth not for the sheep"?[1] Why do they not honour equally both of these true sayings of the Lord, the one in which flight is permitted or enjoined, the other in which it is rebuked and censured, by taking pains so to understand them as to find that they are, as is indeed the case, not opposed to each other? And how is their reconciliation to be found, unless that which I have above proved be borne in mind, that under pressure of persecution we who are ministers of Christ ought to flee from the places in which we are only in one or other of two cases, namely, either that there is no congregation to which we may minister, or that there is a congregation, but that the ministry necessary for it can be supplied by others who have not the same reason for flight as makes it imperative on us? Of which we have one example, as already mentioned, in the Apostle Paul escaping by being let down from the wall in a basket, when he was personally sought by the persecutor, there being others on the spot who had not the same necessity for flight, whose remain-

[1] John x. 12, 13.

ing would prevent the Church from being destitute of the service of ministers. Another example we have in the holy Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, who fled when the Emperor Constantius wished to seize him specially, the Catholic people who remained in Alexandria not being abandoned by the other servants of God. But when the people remain and the servants of God flee, and their service is withdrawn, what is this but the guilty flight of the "hireling" who careth not for the sheep? For the wolf will come,—not man, but the devil, who has very often perverted to apostasy believers to whom the daily ministry of the Lord's body was wanting; and so, not "through thy knowledge," but through thine ignorance, "shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died."[1]

7. As for those, however, who flee not because they are deceived by an error, but because they have been overcome by fear, why do they not rather, by the compassion and help of the Lord bestowed on them, bravely fight against their fear, lest evils incomparably heavier and much more to be dreaded befall them? This victory over fear is won wherever the flame of the love of God, without the smoke of worldliness, burns in the heart. For love says, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?"[2] But love is from God. Let us, therefore, beseech Him who requires it of us to bestow it on us, and under its influence let us fear more lest the sheep of Christ should be slaughtered by the sword of spiritual wickedness reaching the heart, than lest they should fall under the sword that can only harm that body in which men are destined at any rate, at some time, and in some way or other, to die. Let us fear more lest the purity of faith should perish through the taint of corruption in the inner man, than lest our women should be subjected by violence to outrage; for if chastity is preserved in the spirit, it is not destroyed by such violence, since it is not destroyed even in the body when there is no base consent of the sufferer to the sin, but only a submission without the consent of the will to that which another does. Let us fear more lest the spark of life in "living stones" be quenched through our absence, than lest the stones and timbers of our earthly buildings be burned in our presence.

[1] 1 Cor. viii. 9, 11. [2] 2 Cor. xi. 29.

Let us fear more lest the members of Christ's body should die for want of spiritual food, than lest the members of our own bodies, being overpowered by the violence of enemies, should be racked with torture. Not because these are things which we ought not to avoid when this is in our power, but because we ought to prefer to suffer them when they cannot be avoided without impiety, unless, perchance, any one be found to maintain that that servant is not guilty of impiety who withdraws the service necessary to piety at the very time when it is peculiarly necessary.

8. Do we forget how, when these dangers have reached their extremity, and there is no possibility of escaping from them by flight, an extraordinary crowd of persons, of both sexes and of all ages, is wont to assemble in the church,—some urgently asking baptism, others reconciliation, others even the doing of penance, and all calling for consolation and strengthening through the administration of sacraments? If the ministers of God be not at their posts at such a time, how great perdition overtakes those who depart from this life either not regenerated or not loosed from their sins![1] How deep also is the sorrow of their believing kindred, who shall not have these lost ones with them in the blissful rest of eternal life! In fine, how loud are the cries of all, and the indignant imprecations of not a few, because of the want of ordinances and the absence of those who should have dispensed them! See what the fear of temporal calamities may effect, and of how great a multitude of eternal calamities it may be the procuring cause. But if the ministers be at their posts, through the strength which God bestows upon them, all are aided,—some are baptized, others reconciled to the Church. None are defrauded of the communion of the Lord's body; all are consoled, edified, and exhorted to ask of God, who is able to do so, to avert all things which are feared,—prepared for both alternatives, so that "if the cup may not pass" from them, His will may be done[2] who cannot will anything that is evil.

9. Assuredly you now see (what, according to your letter, you did not see before) how great advantage the Christian people may obtain if, in the presence of calamity, the presence

[1] Ligati. [2] Matt. xxvi. 42.

of the servants of Christ be not withdrawn from them. You see, also, how much harm is done by their absence, when "they seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's,"[1] and are destitute of that charity of which it is said, "it seeketh not her own,"[2] and fail to imitate him who said, "I seek not mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved,"[3] and who, moreover, would not have fled from the insidious attacks of the imperial persecutor, had he not wished to save himself for the sake of others to whom he was necessary; on which account he says, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you."[4]

10. Here, perhaps, some one may say that the servants of God ought to save their lives by flight when such evils are impending, in order that they may reserve themselves for the benefit of the Church in more peaceful times. This is rightly done by some, when others are not wanting by whom the service of the Church may be supplied, and the work is not deserted by all, as we have stated above that Athanasius did; for the whole Catholic world knows how necessary it was to the Church that he should do so, and how useful was the prolonged life of the man who by his word and loving service defended her against the Arian heretics. But this ought by no means to be done when the danger is common to all; and the thing to be dreaded above all is, lest any one should be supposed to do this not from a desire to secure the welfare of others, but from fear of losing his own life, and should therefore do more harm by the example of deserting the post of duty than all the good that he could do by the preservation of his life for future service. Finally, observe how the holy David acquiesced in the urgent petition of his people, that he should not expose himself to the dangers of battle, and, as it is said in the narrative, "quench the light of Israel,"[5] but was not himself the first to propose it; for had he been so, he would have made many imitate the cowardice which they might have attributed to him, supposing that he had been

[1] Phil. ii. 21. Phil. i. 23, 24. [2] 1 Cor. xiii. 5. [3] 1 Cor. x. 33. [5] 2 Sam. xxi. 17.

prompted to this not through regard to the advantage of others, but under the agitation of fear as to his own life.

11. Another question which we must not regard as unworthy of notice is suggested here. For if the interests of the Church are not to be lost sight of, and if these make it necessary that when any great calamity is impending some ministers should flee, in order that they may survive to minister to those whom they may find remaining after the calamity is passed,—the question arises, what is to be done when it appears that, unless some flee, all must perish together? what if the fury of the destroyer were so restricted as to attack none but the ministers of the Church? What shall we reply? Is the Church to be deprived of the service of her ministers because of fleeing from their work through fear lest she should be more unhappily deprived of their service because of their dying in the midst of their work? Of course, if the laity are exempted from the persecution, it is in their power to shelter and conceal their bishops and clergy in some way, as He shall help them under whose dominion all things are, and who, by His wondrous power, can preserve even one who does not flee from danger. But the reason for our inquiring what is the path of our duty in such circumstances is, that we may not be chargeable with tempting the Lord by expecting divine miraculous interposition on every occasion.

There is, indeed, a difference in the severity of the tempest of calamity when the danger is common to both laity and clergy, as the perils of stormy weather are common to both merchants and sailors on board of the same ship. But far be it from us to esteem this ship of ours so lightly as to admit that it would be right for the crew, and especially for the pilot, to abandon her in the hour of peril, although they might have it in their power to escape by leaping into a small boat, or even swimming ashore. For in the case of those in regard to whom we fear lest through our deserting our work they should perish, the evil which we fear is not temporal death, which is sure to come at one time or other, but eternal death, which may come or may not come, according as we neglect or adopt measures whereby it may be averted. More-

over, when the lives of both laity and clergy are exposed to common danger, what reason have we for thinking that in every place which the enemy may invade all the clergy are likely to be put to death, and not that all the laity shall also die, in which event the clergy, and those to whom they are necessary, would pass from this life at the same time? Or why may we not hope that, as some of the laity are likely to survive, some of the clergy may also be spared, by whom the necessary ordinances may be dispensed to them?

12. Oh that in such circumstances the question debated among the servants of God were which of their number should remain, that the Church might not be left destitute by all fleeing from danger, and which of their number should flee, that the Church might not be left destitute by all perishing in the danger. Such a contest will arise among the brethren who are all alike glowing with love and satisfying the claims of love. And if it were in any case impossible otherwise to terminate the debate, it appears to me that the persons who are to remain and who are to flee should be chosen by lot. For those who say that they, in preference to others, ought to flee, will appear to be chargeable either with cowardice, as persons unwilling to face impending danger, or with arrogance, as esteeming their own lives more necessary to be preserved for the good of the Church than those of other men. Again, perhaps, those who are better will be the first to choose to lay down their lives for the brethren; and so preservation by flight will be given to men whose life is less valuable because their skill in counselling and ruling the Church is less; yet these, if they be pious and wise, will resist the desires of men in regard to whom they see, on the one hand, that it is more important for the Church that they should live, and on the other hand, that they would rather lose their lives than flee from danger. In this case, as it is written, "the lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty;"[1] for, in difficulties of this kind, God judges better than men, whether it please Him to call the better among His servants to the reward of suffering, and to spare the weak, or to make the weak stronger to endure trials, and then to withdraw them

[1] Prov. xviii. 18.

from this life, as persons whose lives could not be so serviceable to the Church as the lives of the others who are stronger than they. If such an appeal to the lot be made, it will be, I admit, an unusual proceeding, but if it is done in any case, who will dare to find fault with it? Who but the ignorant or the prejudiced will hesitate to praise it with the approbation which it deserves? If, however, the use of the lot is not adopted because there is no precedent for such an appeal, let it by all means be secured that the Church be not, through the flight of any one, left destitute of that ministry which is more especially necessary and due to her in the midst of such great dangers. Let no one hold himself in such esteem because of apparent superiority in any grace as to say that he is more worthy of life than others, and therefore more entitled to seek safety in flight. For whoever thinks this is too self-satisfied, and whoever utters this must make all dissatisfied with him.

13. There are some who think that bishops and clergy may, by not fleeing but remaining in such dangers, cause the people to be misled, because, when they see those who are set over them remaining, this makes them not flee from danger. It is easy for them, however, to obviate this objection, and the reproach of misleading others, by addressing their congregations, and saying: "Let not the fact that we are not fleeing from this place be the occasion of misleading you, for we remain here not for our own sakes but for yours, that we may continue to minister to you whatever we know to be necessary to your salvation, which is in Christ; therefore, if you choose to flee, you thereby set us also at liberty from the obligations by which we are bound to remain." This, I think, ought to be said, when it seems to be truly advantageous to remove to places of greater security. If, after such words have been spoken in their hearing, either all or some shall say: "We are at His disposal from whose anger none can escape whithersoever they may go, and whose mercy may be found wherever their lot is cast by those who, whether hindered by known insuperable difficulties, or unwilling to toil after unknown refuges, in which perils may be only changed not finished, prefer not to go away elsewhere,"—most assuredly those who

thus resolve to remain ought not to be left destitute of the service of Christian ministers. If, on the other hand, after hearing their bishops and clergy speak as above, the people prefer to leave the place, to remain behind them is not now the duty of those who were only remaining for their sakes, because none are left there on whose account it would still be their duty to remain.

14. Whoever, therefore, flees from danger in circumstances in which the Church is not deprived, through his flight, of necessary service, is doing that which the Lord has commanded or permitted. But the minister who flees when the consequence of his flight is the withdrawal from Christ's flock of that nourishment by which its spiritual life is sustained, is an "hireling who seeth the wolf coming, and fleeth because he careth not for the sheep."

With love, which I know to be sincere, I have now written what I believe to be true on this question, because you asked my opinion, my dearly beloved brother; but I have not enjoined you to follow my advice, if you can find any better than mine. Be that as it may, we cannot find anything better for us to do in these dangers than continually to beseech the Lord our God to have compassion on us. And as to the matter about which I have written, namely, that ministers should not desert the churches of God, some wise and holy men have by the gift of God been enabled both to will and to do this thing, and have not in the least degree faltered in the determined prosecution of their purpose, even though exposed to the attacks of slanderers.

LETTER CCXXIX.

(A.D. 429.)

TO DARIUS,[1] HIS DESERVEDLY ILLUSTRIOUS AND VERY POWERFUL LORD AND DEAR SON IN CHRIST, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. YOUR character and rank I have learned from my holy brothers and co-bishops, Urbanus and Novatus. The former

[1] This Darius was an officer of distinction in the service of the Empress Placidia, and was the instrument of effecting a reconciliation between her and

of these became acquainted with you near Carthage, in the town of Hilari, and more recently in the town of Sicca; the latter at Sitifis. Through them it has come to pass that I cannot regard you as unknown to me. For though my bodily weakness and the chill of age do not permit me to converse with you personally, it cannot on this account be said that I have not seen you; for the conversation of Urbanus, when he kindly visited me, and the letters of Novatus, so described to me the features, not of your face but of your mind, that I have seen you, and have seen you with all the more pleasure, because I have seen not the outward appearance but the inner man. These features of your character are joyfully seen both by us, and through the mercy of God by yourself also, as in a mirror in the holy Gospel, in which it is written in words uttered by Him who is truth: "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."[1]

2. Those warriors are indeed great and worthy of singular honour, not only for their consummate bravery, but also (which is a higher praise) for their eminent fidelity, by whose labours and dangers, along with the blessing of divine protection and aid, enemies previously unsubdued are conquered, and peace obtained for the State, and the provinces reduced to subjection. But it is a higher glory still to stay war itself with a word, than to slay men with the sword, and to procure or maintain peace by peace, not by war. For those who fight, if they are good men, doubtless seek for peace; nevertheless it is through blood. Your mission, however, is to prevent the shedding of blood. Yours, therefore, is the privilege of averting that calamity which others are under the necessity of producing. Therefore, my deservedly illustrious and very powerful lord and very dear son in Christ, rejoice in this singularly great and real blessing vouchsafed to you, and enjoy it in God, to whom you owe that you are what you are, and that you undertook the accomplishment of such a work. May God "strengthen that

Count Boniface. He was also successful in obtaining a truce with the Vandals, on which Augustine congratulates him in this letter.

[1] Matt. v. 9.

which He hath wrought for us through you."[1] Accept this our salutation, and deign to reply. From the letter of my brother Novatus, I see that he has taken pains that your learned Excellency should become acquainted with me also through my works. If, then, you have read what he has given you, I also shall have become known to your inward perception. As far as I can judge, they will not greatly displease you if you have read them in a loving rather than a critical spirit. It is not much to ask, but it will be a great favour, if for this letter and my works you send us one letter in reply. I salute with due affection the pledge of peace,[2] which through the favour of our Lord and God you have happily received.

LETTER CCXXXI.

(A.D. 429.)

TO DARIUS, HIS SON, AND A MEMBER OF CHRIST, AUGUSTINE, A SERVANT OF CHRIST AND OF THE MEMBERS OF CHRIST, SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. You requested an answer from me as a proof that I had gladly received your letter.[3] Behold, then, I write again; and yet I cannot express the pleasure I felt, either by this answer or by any other, whether I write briefly or at the utmost length, for neither by few words nor by many is it possible for me to express to you what words can never express. I, indeed, am not eloquent, though ready in speech; but I could by no means allow any man, however eloquent, even though he could see as well into my mind as I do myself, to do that which is beyond my own power, viz. to describe in a letter, however able and however long, the effect which your epistle had on my mind. It remains, then, for me so to express to

[1] Ps. lxviii. 29.

[2] Verimodus, the son of Darius.

[3] Referring to Darius' reply (Letter CCXXX.) to the foregoing Letter (CCXXIX) In it, Darius, after reciprocating in the warmest manner every expression of admiration and esteem, expresses his hope that the peace concluded with the Vandals may be permanent, entreats Augustine to pray for him (alluding to the letter said to have been written by Abgaris, king of Edessa, to our Saviour), and asks him to send a copy of his *Confessions* along with his reply to this communication.

you what you wished to know, that you may understand as being in my words that which they do not express. What, then, shall I say? That I was delighted with your letter, exceedingly delighted;—the repetition of this word is not a mere repetition, but, as it were, a perpetual affirmation; because it was impossible to be always saying it, therefore it has been at least once repeated, for in this way perhaps my feelings may be expressed.

2. If some one inquire here what after all delighted me so exceedingly in your letter,—"Was it its eloquence?" I will answer, No; and he, perhaps, will reply, "Was it, then, the praises bestowed on yourself?" but again I will reply, No; and I shall reply thus not because these things are not in that letter, for the eloquence in it is so great that it is very clearly evident that you are naturally endowed with the highest talents, and that you have been most carefully educated; and your letter is undeniably full of my praises. Some one then may say, "Do not these things delight you?" Yes, truly, for "my heart is not," as the poet says, "of horn,"[1] so that I should either not observe these things or observe them without delight. These things do delight; but what have these things to do with that with which I said I was highly delighted? Your eloquence delights me since it is at once genial in sentiment and dignified in expression; and though assuredly I am not delighted with all sorts of praise from all sorts of persons, but only with such praises as you have thought me worthy of, and only coming from those who are such as you are—that is, from persons who, for Christ's sake, love His servants, I cannot deny that I am delighted with the praises bestowed upon me in your letter.

3. Thoughtful and experienced men will be at no loss as to the opinion which they should form of Themistocles (if I remember the name rightly), who, having refused at a banquet to play on the lyre, a thing which the distinguished and learned men of Greece were accustomed to do, and having been on that account regarded as uneducated, was asked, when he expressed his contempt for that sort of amusement, "What, then, does it delight you to hear?" and is reported to have answered: "My own praises." Thoughtful and experienced

[1] Persius, *Sat.* i. line 47. "Cornea."

men will readily see with what design and in what sense these words must have been used by him, or must be understood by them, if they are to believe that he uttered them; for he was in the affairs of this world a most remarkable man, as may be illustrated by the answer which he gave when he was further pressed with the question: "What, then, do you know?" "I know," he replied, "how to make a small republic great." As to the thirst for praise spoken of by Ennius in the words: "All men greatly desire to be praised," I am of opinion that it is partly to be approved of, partly guarded against. For as, on the one hand, we should vehemently desire the truth, which is undoubtedly to be eagerly sought after as alone worthy of praise, even though it be not praised; so, on the other hand, we must carefully shun the vanity which readily insinuates itself along with praise from men: and this vanity is present in the mind when either the things which are worthy of praise are not reckoned worth having unless the man be praised for them by his fellow-men, or the things on account of possessing which any man wishes to be much praised are deserving either of small praise, or it may be of severe censure. Hence Horace, a more careful observer than Ennius, says: "Is fame your passion? Wisdom's powerful charm if thrice read over shall its power disarm."[1]

4. Thus the poet thought that the malady arising from the love of human praise, which was thoroughly attacked with his satire, was to be charmed away by words of healing power. The great Teacher has accordingly taught us by His apostle, that we ought not to do good with a view to be praised by men, that is, we ought not to make the praises of men the motive for our well-doing; and yet, for the sake of men themselves, He teaches us to seek their approbation. For when good men are praised, the praise does not benefit those on whom it is bestowed, but those who bestowed it. For to the good, so far as they are themselves concerned, it is enough that they are good; but those are to be congratulated whose interest it is to imitate the good when the good are praised by them, since they thus show that the persons whom they sincerely praise are persons whose conduct they appreciate.

[1] Horace, Book I. *Ep.* i. lines 36–37. Francis' translation.

The apostle says in a certain place, "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ;"[1] and the same apostle says in another place, "I please all men in all things," and adds the reason, "Not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."[2] Behold what he sought in the praise of men, as it is declared in these words: "Finally, my brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you."[3] All the other things which I have named above, he summed up under the name of Virtue, saying, "If there be any virtue;" but the definition which he subjoined, "Whatsoever things are of good report," he followed up by another suitable word, "If there be any praise." What the apostle says, then, in the first of these passages, "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ," is to be understood as if he said, If the good things which I do were done by me with human praise as my motive, if I were puffed up with the love of praise, I should not be the servant of Christ. The apostle, then, wished to please all men, and rejoiced in pleasing them, not that he might himself be inflated with their praises, but that he being praised might build them up in Christ. Why, then, should it not delight me to be praised by you, since you are too good a man to speak insincerely, and you bestow your praise on things which you love, and which it is profitable and wholesome to love, even though they be not in me? This, moreover, does not benefit you alone, but also me. For if they are not in me, it is good for me that I am put to the blush, and am made to burn with desire to possess them. And in regard to anything in your praise which I recognise as in my possession, I rejoice that I possess it, and that such things are loved by you, and that I am loved for their sake. And in regard to those things which I do not recognise as belonging to me, I not only desire to obtain them, that I may possess them for myself, but also

[1] Gal. i. 10. [2] 1 Cor. x. 33. [3] Phil. iv. 8–9.

that those who love me sincerely may not always be mistaken in praising me for them.

5. Behold how many things I have said, and still I have not yet spoken of that in your letter which delighted me more than your eloquence, and far more than the praises you bestowed on me. What do you think, O excellent man, that this can be? It is that I have acquired the friendship of so distinguished a man as you are, and that without having even seen you; if, indeed, I ought to speak of one as unseen whose soul I have seen in his own letters, though I have not seen his body. In which letters I rest my opinion concerning you on my own knowledge, and not, as formerly, on the testimony of my brethren. For what your character was I had already heard, but how you stood affected to me I knew not until now. From this, your friendship to me, I doubt not that even the praises bestowed on me, which give me pleasure for a reason about which I have already said enough, will much more abundantly benefit the Church of Christ, since the fact that you possess, and study, and love, and commend my labours in defence of the gospel against the remnant of impious idolaters, secures for me a wider influence in these writings in proportion to the high position which you occupy; for, illustrious yourself, you insensibly shed a lustre upon them. You, being celebrated, give celebrity to them, and wherever you shall see that the circulation of them might do good, you will not suffer them to remain altogether unknown. If you ask me how I know this, my reply is, that such is the impression concerning you produced on me by reading your letters. Herein you will now see how great delight your letter could impart to me, for if your opinion of me be favourable, you are aware how great delight is given to me by gain to the cause of Christ. Moreover, when you tell me concerning yourself that, although, as you say, you belong to a family which not for one or two generations, but even to remote ancestors, has been known as able to accept the doctrine of Christ, you have nevertheless been aided by my writings against the Gentile rites so to understand these as you never had done before, can I esteem it a small matter how great benefit our writings, commended and circulated by you, may confer upon others, and to how many and how

illustrious persons your testimony may bring them, and how easily and profitably through these persons they may reach others? Or, reflecting on this, can the joy diffused in my heart be small or moderate in degree?

6. Since, then, I cannot in words express how great delight I have received from your letter, I have spoken of the reason why it delighted me, and now that which I am unable adequately to utter on this subject I leave to you to conjecture. Accept, then, my son—accept, O excellent man, Christian not by outward profession merely, but by Christian love—accept, I say, the books containing my "Confessions," which you desired to have. In these behold me, that you may not praise me beyond what I am; in these believe what is said of me, not by others, but by myself; in these contemplate me, and see what I have been in myself, by myself; and if anything in me please you, join me, because of it, in praising Him to whom, and not to myself, I desire praise to be given. For "He hath made us, and not we ourselves;"[1] indeed, we had destroyed ourselves, but He who made us has made us anew. When, however, you find me in these books, pray for me that I may not fail, but be perfected. Pray, my son; pray. I feel what I say; I know what I ask. Let it not seem to you a thing unbecoming, and, as it were, beyond your merits. You will defraud me of a great help if you do not do so. Let not only you yourself, but all also who by your testimony shall come to love me, pray for me. Tell them that I have entreated this, and if you think highly of us, consider that we command what we have asked; in any case, whether as granting a request or obeying a command, pray for us. Read the Divine Scriptures, and you will find that the apostles themselves, the leaders of Christ's flock, requested this from their sons, or enjoined it on their hearers. I certainly, since you ask it of me, will do this for you as far as I can. He sees this who is the Hearer of prayer, and who saw that I prayed for you before you asked me; but let this proof of love be reciprocated by you. We are placed over you; you are the flock of God. Consider and see that our dangers are greater than yours, and pray for us, for this becomes both us and you, that we may give a good account of

[1] Ps. c. 3.

you to the Chief Shepherd and Head over us all, and may escape both from the trials of this world and its allurements, which are still more dangerous, except when the peace of this world has the effect for which the apostle has directed us to pray, "That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."[1] For if godliness and honesty be wanting, what is a quiet and peaceable exemption from the evils of the world but an occasion either of inviting men to enter, or assisting men to follow, a course of self-indulgence and perdition? Do you, then, ask for us what we ask for you, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. Let us ask this for each other wherever you are and wherever we are, for He whose we are is everywhere present.

7. I have sent you also other books which you did not ask, that I might not rigidly restrict myself to what you asked:—my works on *Faith in Things Unseen*, on *Patience*, on *Continence*, on *Providence*, and a large work on *Faith, Hope, and Charity*. If, while you are in Africa, you shall read all these, either send your opinion of them to me, or let it be sent to some place whence it may be sent us by my lord and brother Aurelius, though wherever you shall be we hope to have letters from you; and do you expect letters from us as long as we are able. I most gratefully received the things you sent to me, in which you deigned to aid me both in regard to my bodily health,[2] since you desire me to be free from the hindrance of sickness in devoting my time to God, and in regard to my library, that I may have the means to procure new books and repair the old. May God recompense you, both in the present life and in that to come, with those favours which He has prepared for such as He has willed you to be. I request you now to salute again for me, as before, the pledge of peace entrusted to you, very dear to both of us.

[1] 1 Tim. ii. 2.

[2] The reference is to some medicines sent by Darius, and mentioned by him in the end of his letters.

FOURTH DIVISION.

[Hitherto the order followed in the arrangement of the letters has been the chronological. It being impossible to ascertain definitely the date of composition of thirty-nine of the letters, these have been placed by the Benedictine editors in the fourth division, and in it they are arranged under two principal divisions, the first embracing some controversial letters, and the second a number of those which were occasioned either by Augustine's interest in the welfare of individuals, or by the claims of official duty.]

LETTER CCXXXII.

TO THE PEOPLE OF MADAURA, MY LORDS WORTHY OF PRAISE, AND BRETHREN MOST BELOVED, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING, IN REPLY TO THE LETTER RECEIVED BY THE HANDS OF BROTHER FLORENTINUS.

1. If, perchance, such a letter as I have received was sent to me by those among you who are Catholic Christians, the only thing at which I am surprised is, that it was sent in the name of the municipality, and not in their own name. If, however, it has pleased all or almost all of your men of rank to send a letter to me, I am surprised at the title "Father" and the "salutation in the Lord" addressed to me by you, of whom I know certainly, and with much regret, that you regard with superstitious veneration those idols against which your temples are more easily shut than your hearts; or, I should rather say, those idols which are not more truly shut up in your temples than in your hearts.[1] Can it be that you are at last, after wise reflection, seriously thinking of that salvation which is in the Lord, in whose name you have chosen to salute me? For if it be not so, I ask you, my lords worthy of all praise, and brethren most beloved, in what have I injured, in what have I offended your benevolence, that you should think

[1] Reference is here made to the laws of Honorius against idolatry, passed in A.D. 399. See below in sec. 3.

it right to treat me with ridicule rather than with respect in the salutation prefixed to your letter?

2. For when I read the words, "To Father Augustine, eternal salvation in the Lord," I was suddenly elated with such fulness of hope, that I believed you either already converted to the Lord Himself, and to that eternal salvation of which He is the author, or desirous, through our ministry, to be so converted. But when I read the rest of the letter my heart was chilled. I inquired, however, from the bearer of the letter, whether you were already Christians or were desirous to be so. After I learned from his answer that you were in no way changed, I was deeply grieved that you thought it right not only to reject the name of Christ, to whom you already see the whole world submitting, but even to insult His name in my person; for I could not think of any other Lord than Christ the Lord in whom a bishop could be addressed by you as a father, and if there had been any doubt as to the meaning to be attached to your words, it would have been removed by the closing sentence of your letter, where you say plainly, "We desire that, for many years, your lordship may always, in the midst of your clergy, be glad in God and His Christ." After reading and pondering all these things, what could I (or, indeed, could any man) think but that these words were written either as the genuine expression of the mind of the writers, or with an intention to deceive? If you write these things as the genuine expression of your mind, who has barred your way to the truth? Who has strewn it with thorns? What enemy has placed masses of rock across your path? In fine, if you are desiring to come in, who has shut the door of our places of worship against you, so that you are unwilling to enjoy the same salvation with us in the same Lord in whose name you salute us? But if you write these things deceitfully and mockingly, do you, then, in the very act of imposing on me the care of your affairs, presume to insult, with the language of feigned adulation, the name of Him through whom alone I can do anything, instead of honouring Him with the veneration which is due to Him?

3. Be assured, dearest brethren, that it is with inexpressible trembling of heart on your account that I write this letter to

you, for I know how much greater in the judgment of God must be your guilt and your doom if I shall have said these things to you in vain. In regard to everything in the history of the human race which our forefathers observed and handed down to us, and not less in regard to everything connected with the seeking and holding of true religion which we now see and put on record for those who come after us, the Divine Scriptures have not been silent; so far from this, all things come to pass exactly according to the predictions of Scripture. You cannot deny that you see the Jewish people torn from the abodes of their ancestry, dispersed and scattered over almost every country: now, the origin of that people, their gradual increase, their losing of the kingdom, their dispersion through all the world, have happened exactly as foretold. You cannot deny that you see that the word of the Lord, and the law coming forth from that people through Christ, who was miraculously born among their nation, has taken and retained possession of the faith of all nations: now we read of all these announced beforehand as we see them. You cannot deny that you see what we call heresies and schisms, that is, many cut off from the root of the Christian society, which by means of the Apostolic Sees, and the successions of bishops, is spread abroad in an indisputably world-wide diffusion, claiming the name of Christians, and as withering branches boasting of the mere appearance of being derived from the true vine: all this has been foreseen, predicted, and described in Scripture. You cannot deny that you see some temples of the idols fallen into ruin through neglect, others thrown down by violence, others closed, and some applied to other purposes; you see the idols themselves either broken to pieces, or burnt, or shut up, or destroyed, and the same powers of this world, who in defence of idols persecuted Christians, now vanquished and subdued by Christians, who did not fight for the truth but died for it, and directing their attacks and their laws against the very idols in defence of which they put Christians to death, and the highest dignitary of the noblest empire laying aside his crown and kneeling as a suppliant at the tomb of the fisherman Peter.

4. The Divine Scriptures, which have now come into the

hands of all, testified long before that all these things would come to pass. We rejoice that all these things have happened, with a faith which is strong in proportion to the discovery thereby made of the greatness of the authority with which they are declared in the sacred Scriptures. Seeing, then, that all these things have come to pass as foretold, are we, I ask, to suppose that the judgment of God, which we read of in the same Scriptures as appointed to separate finally between the believing and the unbelieving, is the only event in regard to which the prophecy is to fail? Yea, certainly, as all these other events have come, it shall also come. Nor shall there be a man of our time who shall be able in that day to plead anything in defence of his unbelief. For the name of Christ is on the lips of every man: it is invoked by the just man in doing justice, by the perjurer in the act of deceiving, by the king to confirm his rule, by the soldier to nerve himself for battle, by the husband to establish his authority, by the wife to confess her submission, by the father to enforce his command, by the son to declare his obedience, by the master in supporting his right to govern, by the slave in performing his duty, by the humble in quickening piety, by the proud in stimulating ambition, by the rich man when he gives, and by the poor when he receives an alms, by the drunkard at his wine-cup, by the beggar at the gate, by the good man in keeping his word, by the wicked man in violating his promises: all frequently use the name of Christ, the Christian with genuine reverence, the Pagan with feigned respect; and they shall undoubtedly give to that same Being whom they invoke an account both of the spirit and of the language in which they repeat His name.

5. There is One invisible, from whom, as the Creator and First Cause, all things seen by us derive their being: He is supreme, eternal, unchangeable, and comprehensible by none save Himself alone. There is One by whom the supreme Majesty utters and reveals Himself, namely, the Word, not inferior to Him by whom it is begotten and uttered, by which Word He who begets it is manifested. There is One who is holiness, the sanctifier of all that becomes holy, who is the inseparable and undivided mutual communion between this unchangeable Word by whom that First Cause is revealed, and

that First Cause who reveals Himself by the Word which is His equal. But who is able with perfectly calm and pure mind to contemplate this whole Essence (whom I have endeavoured to describe without giving His name, instead of giving His name without describing Him), and to draw blessedness from that contemplation, and by sinking, as it were, in the rapture of such meditation, to become oblivious of self, and to press on to that the sight of which is beyond our sphere of perception; in other words, to be clothed with immortality, and obtain that eternal salvation which you were pleased to desire on my behalf in your greeting? Who, I say, is able to do this but the man who, confessing his sins, shall have levelled with the dust all the vain risings of pride, and prostrated himself in meekness and humility to receive God as his Teacher?

6. Since, therefore, it is necessary that we be first brought down from vain self-sufficiency to lowliness of spirit, that rising thence we may attain to real exaltation, it was not possible that this spirit could be produced in us by any method at once more glorious and more gentle (subduing our haughtiness by persuasion instead of violence) than that the Word by whom the Father reveals Himself to angels, who is His Power and Wisdom, who could not be discerned by the human heart so long as it was blinded by love for the things which are seen, should condescend to assume our nature, and so to exercise and manifest His personality when incarnate as to make men more afraid of being elated by the pride of man, than of being brought low after the example of God. Therefore the Christ who is preached throughout the whole world is not Christ adorned with an earthly crown, nor Christ rich in earthly treasures, nor Christ illustrious for earthly prosperity, but Christ crucified. This was ridiculed, at first, by whole nations of proud men, and is still ridiculed by a remnant among the nations, but it was the object of faith at first to a few and now to whole nations, because when Christ crucified was preached at that time, notwithstanding the ridicule of the nations, to the few who believed, the lame received power to walk, the dumb to speak, the deaf to hear, the blind to see, and the dead were restored to life. Thus, at

length, the pride of this world was convinced that, even among the things of this world, there is nothing more powerful than the humility of God,[1] so that beneath the shield of a divine example that humility, which it is most profitable for men to practise, might find defence against the contemptuous assaults of pride.

7. O men of Madaura, my brethren, nay, my fathers,[2] I beseech you to awake at last: this opportunity of writing to you God has given to me. So far as I could, I rendered my service and help in the business of brother Florentinus, by whom, as God willed it, you wrote to me; but the business was of such a nature, that even without my assistance it might have been easily transacted, for almost all the men of his family, who reside at Hippo, know Florentinus, and deeply regret his bereavement. But the letter was sent by you to me, that, having occasion to reply, it might not seem presumptuous on my part, when the opportunity was afforded me by yourselves, to say something concerning Christ to the worshippers of idols. But I beseech you, if you have not taken His name in vain in that epistle, suffer not these things which I write to you to be in vain; but if in using His name you wished to mock me, fear Him whom the world formerly in its pride scorned as a condemned criminal, and whom the same world now, subjected to His sway, awaits as its Judge. For the desire of my heart for you, expressed as far as in my power by this letter, shall witness against you at the judgment-seat of Him who shall establish for ever those who believe in Him and confound the unbelieving. May the one true God deliver you wholly from the vanity of this world, and turn you to Himself, my lords worthy of all praise and brethren most beloved.

LETTER CCXXXVII.

THIS letter was addressed to Ceretius, a bishop, who had sent to Augustine certain apocryphal writings, on which the

[1] 1 Cor. i. 23–25.

[2] Referring to his birth at Tagaste (not far distant from Madaura), and to Madaura as the scene of the studies of his boyhood.

Spanish heretical sect called Priscillianists[1] founded some of their doctrines. Ceretius had especially directed his attention to a hymn which they alleged to have been composed by the Lord Jesus Christ, and given by Him to His disciples on that night on which He was betrayed, when they sang an "hymn" before going out to the Mount of Olives. The length of the letter precludes its insertion here, but we believe it will interest many to read the few lines of this otherwise long-forgotten hymn, which Augustine has here preserved. They are as follows:—

"Salvare volo et salvari volo;
Solvere volo et solvi volo;
Ornare volo et ornari volo;
Generari volo;
Cantare volo, saltate cuncti:
Plangere volo, tundite vos omnes:
Lucerna sum tibi, ille qui me vides;
Janua sum tibi, quicunque me pulsas;
Qui vides quod ago, tace opera mea;
Verbo illusi cuncta et non sum illusus in totum."

The reader who ponders these extracts, and remembers the occasion on which the hymn is alleged to have been composed, will agree with us that Augustine employs a very unnecessary fulness of argument in devoting several paragraphs to demolish the claims advanced on its behalf as a revelation more profound and sacred than anything contained in the canonical Scriptures. Augustine also brings against the Priscillianists the charge of justifying perjury when it might be of service in concealing their real opinions, and quotes a line in which, as he had heard from some who once belonged to that sect, the lawfulness of such deceitful conduct was taught:—

"Jura, perjura, secretum prodere noli."

[1] See vol. i. p. 120, note 2.

LETTER CCXLV.

TO POSSIDIUS,[1] MY MOST BELOVED LORD AND VENERABLE BROTHER AND PARTNER IN THE SACERDOTAL OFFICE, AND TO THE BRETHREN WHO ARE WITH HIM, AUGUSTINE AND THE BRETHREN WHO ARE WITH HIM SEND GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. It requires more consideration to decide what to do with those who refuse to obey you, than to discover how to show them that things which they do are unlawful. Meanwhile, however, the letter of your Holiness has come upon me when I am exceedingly pressed with business, and the very hasty departure of the bearer has made it necessary for me to write you in reply, but has not given me time to answer as I ought to have done in regard to the matters on which you have consulted me. Let me say, however, in regard to ornaments of gold and costly dress, that I would not have you come to a precipitate decision in the way of forbidding their use, except in the case of those who, neither being married nor intending to marry, are bound to consider only how they may please God. But those who belong to the world have also to consider how they may in these things please their wives if they be husbands, their husbands if they be wives;[2] with this limitation, that it is not becoming even in married women to uncover their hair, since the apostle commands women to keep their heads covered.[3] As to the use of pigments by women in colouring the face, in order to have a ruddier or a fairer complexion, this is a dishonest artifice, by which I am sure that even their own husbands do not wish to be deceived; and it is only for their own husbands that women ought to be permitted to adorn themselves, according to the toleration, not the injunction, of Scripture. For the true adorning, especially of Christian men and women, consists not only in the absence of all deceitful painting of the complexion, but in the possession

[1] Possidius, a disciple of Augustine, spoken of in Letter CI. sec. 1, p. 29, was the Bishop of Calama who made the narrow escape recorded in Letter XCI. sec. 8, vol. i. p. 388. He was for forty years an intimate friend of Augustine, was with him at his death, and wrote his biography.

[2] 1 Cor. vii. 32–34.

[3] 1 Cor. xi. 5–13.

not of magnificent golden ornaments or rich apparel, but of a blameless life.

2. As for the accursed superstition of wearing amulets (among which the ear-rings worn by men at the top of the ear on one side are to be reckoned), it is practised with the view not of pleasing men, but of doing homage to devils. But who can expect to find in Scripture express prohibition of every form of wicked superstition, seeing that the apostle says generally, "I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils,"[1] and again, "What concord hath Christ with Belial?"[2] unless, perchance, the fact that he named Belial, while he forbade in general terms fellowship with devils, leaves it open for Christians to sacrifice to Neptune, because we nowhere read an express prohibition of the worship of Neptune! Meanwhile, let those unhappy people be admonished that, if they persist in disobedience to salutary precepts, they must at least forbear from defending their impieties, and thereby involving themselves in greater guilt. But why should we argue at all with them if they are afraid to take off their ear-rings, and are not afraid to receive the body of Christ while wearing the badge of the devil?

As to ordaining a man who was baptized in the Donatist sect, I cannot take the responsibility of recommending you to do this; it is one thing for you to do it if you are left without alternative, it is another thing for me to advise that you should do it.

LETTER CCXLVI.

TO LAMPADIUS, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING.

1. On the subject of Fate and Fortune, by which, as I perceived when I was with you, and as I now know in a more gratifying and more reliable way by your own letter, your mind is seriously disturbed, I ought to write you a considerable volume; the Lord will enable me to explain it in the manner which He knows to be best fitted to preserve your faith. For it is no small evil that when men embrace perverse

[1] 1 Cor. x. 20. [2] 2 Cor. vi. 15.

opinions they are not only drawn by the allurement of pleasure to commit sin, but are also turned aside to vindicate their sin rather than seek to have it healed by acknowledging that they have done wrong.

2. Let me, therefore, briefly remind you of one thing bearing on the question which you certainly know, that all laws and all means of discipline, commendations, censures, exhortations, threatenings, rewards, punishments, and all other things by which mankind are managed and ruled, are utterly subverted and overthrown, and found to be absolutely devoid of justice, unless the will is the cause of the sins which a man commits. How much more legitimate and right, therefore, is it for us to reject the absurdities of astrologers [*mathematici*], than to submit to the alternative necessity of condemning and rejecting the laws proceeding from divine authority, or even the means needful for governing our own families. In this the astrologers themselves ignore their own doctrine as to Fate and Fortune, for when any one of them, after selling to moneyed simpletons his silly prognostications of Fate, calls back his thoughts from the ivory tablets to the management and care of his own house, he reproves his wife, not with words only, but with blows, if he finds her, I do not say jesting rather forwardly, but even looking too much out of the window. Nevertheless, if she were to expostulate in such a case, saying: "Why beat *me?* beat Venus, rather, if you can, since it is under that planet's influence that I am compelled to do what you complain of,"—he would certainly apply his energies not to invent some of the absurd jargon by which he cajoles the public, but to inflict some of the just correction by which he maintains his authority at home.

3. When, therefore, any one, upon being reproved, affirms that Fate is the cause of the action, and insists that therefore he is not to be blamed, because he says that under the compulsion of Fate he did the action which is censured, let him come back to apply this to his own case, let him observe this principle in managing his own affairs: let him not chastise a dishonest servant; let him not complain of a disrespectful son; let him not utter threats against a mischievous neighbour. For in doing which of these things would he act justly, if all

from whom he suffers such wrong are impelled to commit it by Fate, not by any fault of their own? If, however, from the right inherent in himself, and the duty incumbent on him as the head of a family towards all whom for the time he has under his control, he exhorts them to do good, deters them from doing evil, commands them to obey his will, honours those who yield implicit obedience, inflicts punishment on those who set him at naught, gives thanks to those who do him good, and hates those who are ungrateful,—shall I wait to prove the absurdity of the astrologer's calculations of Fate, when I find him proclaiming, not by words but by deeds, things so conclusive against his pretensions that he seems to destroy almost with his own hands every hair on the heads of the astrologers?

If your eager desire is not satisfied with these few sentences, and demands a book which will take longer time to read on this subject, you must wait patiently until I get some respite from other duties; and you must pray to God that He may be pleased to allow both leisure and capacity to write, so as to set your mind at rest on this matter. I will, however, do this with more willing readiness, if your Charity does not grudge to remind me of it by frequent letters, and to show me in your reply what you think of this letter.

LETTER CCL.

TO HIS BELOVED LORD AND VENERABLE BROTHER AND PARTNER IN THE PRIESTLY OFFICE, AUXILIUS,[1] AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. Our son Classicianus, a man of rank, has addressed to me a letter complaining bitterly that he has suffered excommunication wrongfully at the hand of your Holiness. His account of the matter is, that he came to the church with a small escort suitable to his official authority, and begged of you that you would not, to the detriment of their own spiritual

[1] Probably the Bishop of Nurco, named Auxilius, who was present at the conference in Carthage in 411.

welfare, extend the privilege of the sanctuary to men who, after violating an oath which they had taken on the Gospel, were seeking in the house of faith itself assistance and protection in their crime of breaking faith; that thereafter the men themselves, reflecting on the sin which they had committed, went forth from the church, not under violent compulsion, but of their own accord; and that because of this transaction your Holiness was so displeased with him, that with the usual forms of ecclesiastical procedure you smote him and all his household with a sentence of excommunication.

On reading this letter from him, being very much troubled, the thoughts of my heart being agitated like the waves of a stormy sea, I felt it impossible to forbear from writing to you, to beg that if you have thoroughly examined your judgment in this matter, and have proved it by irrefragable reasoning or Scripture testimonies, you will have the kindness to teach me also the grounds on which it is just that a son should be anathematized for the sin of his father, or a wife for the sin of her husband, or a servant for the sin of his master, or how it is just that even the child as yet unborn should lie under an anathema, and be debarred, even though death were imminent, from the deliverance provided in the laver of regeneration, if he happen to be born in a family at the time when the whole household is under the ban of excommunication. For this is not one of those judgments merely affecting the body, in which, as we read in Scripture, some despisers of God were slain with all their households, though these had not been sharers in their impiety. In those cases, indeed, as a warning to the survivors, death was inflicted on *bodies* which, as mortal, were destined at some time to die; but a spiritual judgment, founded on what is written, "That which ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven,"[1]—is binding on *souls*, concerning which it is said, "As the soul of the father is mine, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth it shall die."[2]

2. It may be that you have heard that other priests of great reputation have in some cases included the household of a transgressor in the anathema pronounced on him; but these

[1] Matt. xvi. 19. [2] Ezek. xviii. 14.

could, perchance, if they were required, give a good reason for so doing. For my own part, although I have been most grievously troubled by the cruel excesses with which some men have vexed the Church, I have never ventured to do as you have done, for this reason, that if any one were to challenge me to justify such an act, I could give no satisfactory reply. But if, perchance, the Lord has revealed to you that it may be justly done, I by no means despise your youth and your inexperience, as having been but recently elevated to high office in the Church. Behold, though far advanced in life, I am ready to learn from one who is but young; and notwithstanding the number of years for which I have been a bishop, I am ready to learn from one who has not yet been a twelvemonth in the same office, if he undertakes to teach me how we can justify our conduct, either before men or before God, if we inflict a spiritual punishment on innocent souls because of another person's crime, in which they are not involved in the same way as they are involved in the original sin of Adam, in whom "all have sinned." For although the son of Classicianus derived through his father, from our first parent, guilt which behoved to be washed away by the sacred waters of baptism, who hesitates for a moment to say that he is in no way responsible for any sin which his father may have committed, since he was born, without his participation? What shall I say of his wife? What of so many souls in the entire household?—of which if even one, in consequence of the severity which included the whole household in the excommunication, should perish through departing from the body without baptism, the loss thus occasioned would be an incomparably greater calamity than the bodily death of an innumerable multitude, even though they were innocent men, dragged from the courts of the sanctuary and murdered. If, therefore, you are able to give a good reason for this, I trust that you will in your reply communicate it to me, that I also may be able to do the same; but if you cannot, what right have you to do, under the promptings of inconsiderate excitement, an act for which, if you were asked to give a satisfactory reason, you could find none?

3. What I have said hitherto applies to the case even

on the supposition that our son Classicianus has done something which might appear to demand most righteously at your hands the punishment of excommunication. But if the letter which he sent to me contained the truth, there was no reason why even he himself (even though his household had been exempted from the stroke) should have been so punished. As to this, however, I do not interfere with your Holiness; I only beseech you to pardon him when he asks forgiveness, if he acknowledges his fault; and if, on the other hand, you, upon reflection, acknowledge that he did nothing wrong, since in fact the right rather lay on his side who earnestly demanded that in the house of faith, faith should be sacredly kept, and that it should not be broken in the place where the sinfulness of such breach of faith is taught from day to day, do, in this event, what a man of piety ought to do,—that is to say, if to you as a man anything has happened such as was confessed by one who was truly a man of God in the words of the psalm, "Mine eye was discomposed by anger,"[1] fail not to cry to the Lord, as he did, "Have pity on me, O Lord, for I am weak,"[2] so that He may stretch forth His right hand to you, rebuking the storm of your passion, and making your mind calm that you may see and may perform what is just; for, as it is written, "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."[3] And think not that, because we are bishops, it is impossible for unjust passionate resentment to gain secretly upon us; let us rather remember that, because we are men, our life in the midst of temptation's snares is beset with the greatest possible dangers. Cancel, therefore, the ecclesiastical sentence which, perhaps under the influence of unusual excitement, you have passed; and let the mutual love which, even from the time when you were a catechumen, has united him and you, be restored again; let strife be banished and peace invited to return, lest this man who is your friend be lost to you, and the devil who is your enemy rejoice over you both. Mighty is the mercy of our God; it may be that His compassion shall hear even my prayer, imploring of Him that my sorrow on your account may not be increased, but that rather what I have begun to suffer may be

[1] Ps. vi. 8, LXX. [2] Ps. vi. 3. [3] Jas. i. 20.

removed; and may your youth, not despising my old age, be encouraged and made full of joy by His grace! Farewell!

[Annexed to this letter is a fragment of a letter written at the same time to Classicianus; it is as follows:—

To restrain those who for the offence of one soul bind a transgressor's entire household, that is, a large number of souls, under one sentence of excommunication, and especially to prevent any one from departing this life unbaptized in consequence of such an anathema,—also to decide the question whether persons ought not to be driven forth even from a church, who seek a refuge there in order that they may break the faith pledged to sureties, I desire with the Lord's help to use the necessary measures in our Council, and, if it be necessary, to write to the Apostolic See; that, by a unanimous authoritative decision of all, we may have the course which ought to be followed in these cases determined and established. One thing I say deliberately as an unquestionable truth, that if any believer has been wrongfully excommunicated, the sentence will do harm rather to him who pronounces it than to him who suffers this wrong. For it is by the Holy Spirit dwelling in holy persons that any one is loosed or bound, and He inflicts unmerited punishment upon no one; for by Him the love which worketh not evil is shed abroad in our hearts.[1]]

LETTER CCLIV.

TO BENENATUS, MY MOST BLESSED LORD, MY ESTEEMED AND AMIABLE BROTHER AND PARTNER IN THE PRIESTLY OFFICE, AND TO THE BRETHREN WHO ARE WITH HIM, AUGUSTINE AND THE BRETHREN WHO ARE WITH HIM SEND GREETING IN THE LORD.

THE maiden[2] about whom your Holiness wrote to me is at present disposed to think, that if she were of full age she

[1] This noble vindication of Christian liberty merits quotation in the original:—"Illud plane non temere dixerim, quod si quisquam fidelium fuerit anathematus injuste, ei potius oberit qui faciet quam ei qui hanc patietur injuriam. Spiritus enim sanctus habitans in sanctis, per quem quisque ligatur aut solvitur, immeritam nulli pœnam ingerit: per eum quippe diffunditur charitas in cordibus nostris quæ non agit perperam."

[2] The maiden referred to was an orphan whom a magistrate (*vir spectabilis*)

would refuse every proposal of marriage. She is, however, so young, that even if she were disposed to marriage, she ought not yet to be either given or betrothed to any one. Besides this, my lord Benenatus, brother revered and beloved, it must be remembered that God takes her under guardianship in His Church with the design of protecting her against wicked men; placing her, therefore, under my care not so as that she can be given by me to whomsoever I might choose, but so as that she cannot be taken away against my will by any person who would be an unsuitable partner. The proposal which you have been pleased to mention is one which, if she were disposed and prepared to marry, would not displease me; but whether she will marry any one,—although for my own part, I would much prefer that she carried out what she now talks of,—I do not in the meantime know, for she is at an age in which her declaration that she wishes to be a nun is to be received rather as the flippant utterance of one talking heedlessly, than as the deliberate promise of one making a solemn vow. Moreover, she has an aunt by the mother's side married to our honourable brother Felix, with whom I have conferred in regard to this matter,—for I neither could, nor indeed should have avoided consulting him,—and he has not been reluctant to entertain the proposal, but has, on the contrary, expressed his satisfaction; but he expressed not unreasonably his regret that nothing had been written to him on the subject, although his relationship entitled him to be apprised of it. For, perhaps, the mother of the maiden will also come forward, though in the meantime she does not make

had requested Augustine to bring up as a ward of the Church. Four letters written by him concerning her have been preserved, viz. the 252d, in which he intimates to Felix that he can decide nothing in regard to her without consulting the friend by whom she had been placed under his guardianship; the 253d, expressing to Benenatus his surprise that he should propose for her a marriage which would not strengthen the Church; the 254th, addressed also to Benenatus, which we have translated as a specimen of the series; and the 255th, in which, writing to Rusticus, a Pagan who had sought her hand for his son, Augustine bluntly denies his request, referring him for the grounds of the refusal to his correspondence with Benenatus.

Two Catholic bishops named Benenatus attended the conference with the Donatists at Carthage in 412; the one who belonged to Hospsti, in Numidia, is supposed to be Augustine's correspondent.

herself known, and to a mother's wishes in regard to the giving away of a daughter, nature gives in my opinion the precedence above all others, unless the maiden herself be already old enough to have legitimately a stronger claim to choose for herself what she pleases. I wish your Honour also to understand, that if the final and entire authority in the matter of her marriage were committed to me, and she herself, being of age and willing to marry, were to entrust herself to me under God as my Judge to give her to whomsoever I thought best,—I declare, and I declare the truth, in saying that the proposal which you mention pleases me meanwhile, but because of God being my Judge I cannot pledge myself to reject on her behalf a better offer if it were made; but whether any such proposal shall at any future time be made is wholly uncertain. Your Holiness perceives, therefore, how many important considerations concur to make it impossible for her to be, in the meantime, definitely promised to any one.

LETTER CCLXIII.

TO THE EMINENTLY RELIGIOUS LADY AND HOLY DAUGHTER SAPIDA, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING IN THE LORD.

1. THE gift prepared by the just and pious industry of your own hands, and kindly presented by you to me, I have accepted, lest I should increase the grief of one who needs, as I perceive, much rather to be comforted by me; especially because you expressed yourself as esteeming it no small consolation to you if I would wear this tunic, which you had made for that holy servant of God your brother, since he, having departed from the land of the dying, is raised above the need of the things which perish in the using. I have, therefore, complied with your desire, and whatever be the kind and degree of consolation which you may feel this to yield, I have not refused it to your affection for your brother.[1]

[1] The hesitation which Augustine here indicates in regard to accepting this gift may be understood from the following sentences of one of his sermons :— "Let no one give me a present of clothing, whether linen, or tunic, or any other

The tunic which you sent I have accordingly accepted, and have already begun to wear it before writing this to you. Be therefore of good cheer; but apply yourself, I beseech you, to far better and far greater consolations, in order that the cloud which, through human weakness, gathers darkness closely round your heart, may be dissipated by the words of divine authority; and, at all times, so live that you may live with your brother, since he has so died that he lives still.

2. It is indeed a cause for tears that your brother, who loved you, and who honoured you especially for your pious life, and your profession as a consecrated virgin, is no more before your eyes, as hitherto, going in and out in the assiduous discharge of his ecclesiastical duties as a deacon of the church of Carthage, and that you shall no more hear from his lips the honourable testimony which, with kindly, pious, and becoming affection, he was wont to render to the holiness of a sister so dear to him. When these things are pondered, and are regretfully desired[1] with all the vehemence of long-cherished

article of dress, except as a gift to be used in common by my brethren and myself. I will accept nothing for myself which is not to be of service to our community, because I do not wish to have anything which does not equally belong to all the rest. Wherefore I request you, my brethren, to offer me no gift of apparel which may not be worn by the others as suitably as by me. A gift of costly raiment, for example, may sometimes be presented to me as becoming apparel for a bishop to wear; but it is not becoming for Augustine, who is poor, and who is the son of poor parents. Would you have men say that in the Church I found means to obtain richer clothing than I could have had in my father's house, or in the pursuit of secular employment? That would be a shame to me! The clothing worn by me must be such that I can give it to my brethren if they require it. I do not wish anything which would not be suitable for a presbyter, a deacon, or a sub-deacon, for I receive everything in common with them. If gifts of more costly apparel be given to me, I shall sell them, as has been my custom hitherto, in order that, if the dress be not available for all, the money realized by the sale may be a common benefit. I sell them accordingly, and distribute their price among the poor. Wherefore, if any wish me to wear articles of clothing presented to me as gifts, let them give such clothing as shall not make me blush when I use it. For I assure you that a costly dress makes me blush, because it is not in harmony with my profession, or with such exhortations as I now give to you, and ill becomes one whose frame is bent, and whose locks are whitened, as you see, by age."—*Sermon* 356, Bened. edition, vol. v. col. 1389, quoted by Tillemont, xiii. p. 222.

[1] For *requiritur* the Benedictine editors suggest *recurrit*, as a conjectural emendation of the text. We propose, and adopt in the translation, a simpler and perhaps more probable alteration, and read *requiruntur*.

affection, the heart is pierced, and, like blood from the pierced heart, tears flow apace. But let your heart rise heavenward, and your eyes will cease to weep.[1] The things over the loss of which you mourn have indeed passed away, for they were in their nature temporary, but their loss does not involve the annihilation of that love with which Timotheus loved [his sister] Sapida, and loves her still: it abides in its own treasury, and is hidden with Christ in God. Does the miser lose his gold when he stores it in a secret place? Does he not then become, so far as lies in his power, more confidently assured that the gold is in his possession when he keeps it in some safer hiding-place, where it is hidden even from his eyes? Earthly covetousness believes that it has found a safer guardianship for its loved treasures when it no longer sees them; and shall heavenly love sorrow as if it had lost for ever that which it has only sent before it to the garner of the upper world? O Sapida, give yourself wholly to your high calling, and set your affections[2] on things above, where, at the right hand of God, Christ sitteth, who condescended for us to die, that we, though we were dead, might live, and to secure that no man should fear death as if it were destined to destroy him, and that no one of those for whom the Life died should after death be mourned for as if he had lost life. Take to yourself these and other similar divine consolations, before which human sorrow may blush and flee away.

3. There is nothing in the sorrow of mortals over their dearly beloved dead which merits displeasure; but the sorrow of believers ought not to be prolonged. If, therefore, you have been grieved till now, let this grief suffice, and sorrow not as do the heathen, "who have no hope."[3] For when the Apostle Paul said this, he did not prohibit sorrow altogether, but only such sorrow as the heathen manifest who have no hope. For even Martha and Mary, pious sisters, and believers, wept for their brother Lazarus, of whom they knew that he would rise again, though they knew not that he was at that

[1] Sursum sit cor et sicci erunt oculi.

[2] In the Latin word *sapere* here employed, there is an allusion to her name (Sapida), which he has with a view to this repeated immediately before.

[3] 1 Thess. iv. 12.

time to be restored to life; and the Lord Himself wept for that same Lazarus, whom He was going to bring back from death;[1] wherein doubtless He by His example permitted, though He did not by any precept enjoin, the shedding of tears over the graves even of those regarding whom we believe that they shall rise again to the true life. Nor is it without good reason that Scripture saith in the book of Ecclesiasticus: "Let tears fall down over the dead, and begin to lament as if thou hadst suffered great harm thyself;" but adds, a little further on, this counsel, "and then comfort thyself for thy heaviness. For of heaviness cometh death, and the heaviness of the heart breaketh strength."[2]

4. Your brother, my daughter, is alive as to the soul, is asleep as to the body: "Shall not he who sleeps also rise again from sleep?"[3] God, who has already received his spirit, shall again give back to him his body, which He did not take away to annihilate, but only took aside to restore. There is therefore no reason for protracted sorrow, since there is a much stronger reason for everlasting joy. For even the mortal part of your brother, which has been buried in the earth, shall not be for ever lost to you;—that part in which he was visibly present with you, through which also he addressed you and conversed with you, by which he spoke with a voice not less thoroughly known to your ear than was his countenance when presented to your eyes, so that, wherever the sound of his voice was heard, even though he was not seen, he used to be at once recognised by you. These things are indeed withdrawn so as to be no longer perceived by the senses of the living, that the absence of the dead may make surviving friends mourn for them. But seeing that even the bodies of the dead shall not perish (as not even a hair of the head shall perish),[4] but shall, after being laid aside for a time, be received again never more to be laid aside, but fixed finally in the higher condition of existence into which they shall have been changed, certainly there is more cause for thankfulness in the sure hope of an immeasurable eternity, than for sorrow in the transient experience of a very short span

[1] John xi. 19–35.
[2] Ecclus. xxxviii. 16–18.
[3] Ps. xli. 8, LXX.
[4] Luke xxi. 18.

of time. This hope the heathen do not possess, because they know not the Scriptures nor the power of God,[1] who is able to restore what was lost, to quicken what was dead, to renew what has been subjected to corruption, to re-unite things which have been severed from each other, and to preserve thenceforward for evermore what was originally corruptible and shortlived. These things He has promised, who has, by the fulfilment of other promises, given our faith good ground to believe that these also shall be fulfilled. Let your faith often discourse now to you on these things, because your hope shall not be disappointed, though your love may be now for a season interrupted in its exercise; ponder these things; in them find more solid and abundant consolation. For if the fact that I now wear (because he could not) the garment which you had woven for your brother yields some comfort to you, how much more full and satisfactory the comfort which you should find in considering that he for whom this was prepared, and who then did not require an imperishable garment, shall be clothed with incorruption and immortality!

LETTER CCLXIX.

TO NOBILIUS, MY MOST BLESSED AND VENERABLE BROTHER AND PARTNER IN THE PRIESTLY OFFICE, AUGUSTINE SENDS GREETING.

So important is the solemnity at which your brotherly affection invites me to be present, that my heart's desire would carry my poor body to you, were it not that infirmity renders this impossible. I might have come if it had not been winter; I might have braved the winter if I had been young: for in the latter case the warmth of youth would have borne uncomplainingly the cold of the season; in the former case the warmth of summer would have met with gentleness the chill languor of old age. For the present, my lord most blessed, my holy and venerable partner in the priestly office, I cannot undertake in winter so long a journey, carrying with me as I must the frigid feebleness of very many years. I reciprocate

[1] Matt. xxii. 29.

the salutation due to your worth, on behalf of my own welfare I ask an interest in your prayers, and I myself beseech the Lord God to grant that the prosperity of peace may follow the dedication of so great an edifice to His sacred service.[1]

[1] This letter, probably one of the latest from the pen of Augustine, is the last of his letters in the Benedictine edition: the only remaining one, the 270th, was not written by Augustine, but addressed to him by an unknown correspondent.

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